

I Belong to Something Bigger

Questions for Fellowship Groups Week of July 23-29

Hosts – As Michael stated Sunday at church, “This could very well be the last sermon series at Elzie!” As you prepare this week and pray for your Friendship Group participants, know that you are being prayed for as well. We are grateful for your commitment to serve in this role of hosting a Friendship group.

This Week’s Passage (Read or have this passage in the group time. We want to be sure that Scripture is the core of what we share each week.)

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Say, Michael shared about the –

1. The universal church and the local church

- Universal - every person who puts their faith and trust in Jesus belongs to this church - family of God where Christ is the head of the body.

Ask participants to share how this thought begins to affect how they see themselves in the body of Christ.)

Explain how Paul uses the imagery of the body, not a building. Bodies move and act and accomplish. Buildings are static and can be used as tools but can't do anything on their own.

- Local - Paul is also writing to the local church in Corinth who were struggling to live in unity Floating body parts are becoming more and more the norm - detached or semi-detached

Ask participants to explain how they see themselves fitting into a local body of believers.

Say, Michael talked about the idea of

2. Membership versus Dismemberment

Allow participants to share about the idea of being members of an organism rather than an organization.

Discuss the idea of Self-amputation - individualism is the core reason (Army of One slogan)

Say, Membership is Submission of the individual for the sake of the whole.

Ask, How have you seen evidence of this at Friendship?

Say, Friendship is a church of restoration rather than amputation. (You do not have to go into great detail on this and might be best to just say it and let it float in the air a little. Remember, we do not have

to answer every question and sometimes it is good to make a statement, let it sink in a little and move on.)

Say, On the third point, Michael added a couple of body parts that weren't mentioned.

3. Hands, eyes, tonsils, and the appendix

Ask, How are all members valuable and we exercise grace and truth in ministering to and serving in the body.

Michael talked about Friendship being a place of Restoration and Discipleship rather than amputation and accommodation.

Ask participants to discuss that concept and what it means for our local body.

Michael's final point was

4. If I belong to Christ, then I belong attached to the body. Both the universal church and a local church.

Say, I belong to something greater. Gospel friendship. Gospel community. Gospel church.

God is not looking for a super hero. He already has Jesus.

Ask, How is the gospel is the unifying principle?

Say, The church is not here to help people pursue their own private, individual spiritual strategies or spiritual greatness but are a by-product of their belonging to the body.

Say, Also, the church is not a spiritual fort protecting you until you get to heaven.

Ask participants to discuss how The great commandment – (love others, love God) and The great commission – (share the gospel) fit into what the sermon was about today.

Close in a time of prayer thanking God for the beauty of the Body and the importance of us being a part of the universal and local church.