

I Belong to Church

Questions for Covenant Groups Week of September 10-16

Core Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13; Hebrews 13:17-21

Hosts – this week is the final segment of a three-part series sharing about what it means to be a “member” of Friendship Community Church. There are many verses this week to share and please read or have them read in the community group. Scripture is so important in our Community Groups and to staying on point each week.

Say, The church is here to praise God and experience His glory. To establish Christ's kingdom here on earth and to share the gospel. This was Michael's opening statement and gives a good foreshadowing of the rest of our time in discussion together.

Ask, does anyone remember the two other sermon themes in this series we have been in? (Remind participants of Friendship with God and Community that is diverse and unified in Christ. These are the two main themes from the other sermons in this series.)

Ask, does anyone have anything to share of how God has been speaking to you the past couple of weeks related to Friendship and Community. Allow some time for participants to respond.

Say, The first point of the sermon was the church, without a mission, is pointless. Following are some specifics in the mission of God we are to experience.

- a. **Say**, we are to Praise God and experience His glory. Read 1 Peter 2:9
- b. **Say**, Reconcile people to God. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18. **Say**, Paul reminds us that we have been given a ministry of reconciliation. **Ask**, how does this play out in your life? What kind of reconciliation is Paul speaking of here?
- c. **Say**, another specific for us is to preach the gospel to the world. Read Mark 13:10.
- d. **Say**, we are to do good to all. Read Galatians 6:10.
- e. **Say**, while we are not responsible for church growth we are responsible for growth in the Character of God - becoming like Christ, abiding in Him, Growing in the gospel. **Ask**, how are you more like Christ today than you were a year, a month, a week ago?

Say, The second point of the sermon is the church, without leadership, is aimless (rudderless). We have become uncomfortable with authority in our lives.

Say, Friendship is led by staff, guided by elders, all submitting to the authority of Christ. Elders help us stay in biblical lanes of ministry and faithfulness.

Say, the third point is the church, without truth, is worthless.

Ask, How have you seen popular sentiment and self-help become the norm? **Say**, All of us can easily fall for this “theology” at times/seasons in our lives. **Ask**, What are some ways that you can protect yourself from falling for this false theology? (Read Scripture, ask God for discernment through His Word and prayer, etc.)

Say, The Word of God is what we stand on and trust. Two words are bothersome in Scripture - obey and submit.

Read Hebrews 13:17-21. “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord

Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:17-21

Say, the final point of the sermon is the church, without grace, is loveless.

Ask someone to 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13 “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.” “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Say, This passage is for the love and community of believers that overflows to others. While it is applicable to a marriage, in its’ original context it is written to a body of believers, the church. Challenge your group to make the commitment to love one another and the church community in such a way that will forfeit personal preference for the sake of the Kingdom.

Michael has asked us to pray this Scripture this week. After taking prayer requests, pray this prayer with your group- Ephesians 3:14-19 “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:14-19