

I Belong to Community

Questions for Covenant Groups Week of September 3-9

Hosts – this week is the second 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, You will remember that last week we talked about friendship with God and how God seeks relationship with those who are seeking, listening, repenting and believing. And that He is a friend of shady and shiny sinners as well. This week Michael led us to discover more about community. Community is much more than a club and more than just a transactional relationship.

Say, the first point Michael spoke about was **The purpose of community.**

Say, Too often when someone speaks of community it is associated only with sameness. Getting together with those who think, look and act like us.

Ask, How have you been a member of a community in the past where it really was based on just the similarities of those involved? What are some of the benefits of that? What are some of the shortcomings?

Say, a purpose of community is that reflects the community found in the Trinity. God, by His own nature, is three in one. Read Ephesians 4:4-6

Say, we are to be unified as many members modeled in the Trinity itself.

Read Romans 12:5. **Ask**, what does this verse have to say about the beauty of unity?

Say, Another purpose of community is to lead others to faith in Christ. Have someone read John 17:23.

Ask, Have you ever taken the opportunity to lead someone to faith in Christ? (Allow time for one or two to share briefly an experience they have had.)

Say, another purpose of community is to lead believers to maturity. Read Ephesians 4:13. As time allows, have participants share how someone has invested in them to lead them to deeper maturity in Christ.

Say, Michael’s second major point in the sermon was about **Community, diversity, and divisiveness.**

Diversity – not everyone looks, acts, and even carries the same opinions.

In the Early church there was division between Jew and Gentile - ethnic division. Read John 10:16 Here we see Jesus speaking to Jews about people other than Jews – and that there is one flock/ one shepherd.

Read Colossians 3:11 – Here diversity is addressed. **Ask**, What does this verse clearly address for us as believers? Christ is all and in all.

Ask for some issues of divisiveness that Michael shared that the New Testament church experienced (here are the ones Michael shared in the sermon)

- Personal ambition
- Ethnic tension
- Differences of opinion
- Heretical leaders
- Preferences
- False shepherds
- Partisan spirit
- Greed

Read 1 Cor 1:10 – **Ask**, What does this verse refer to? (Here we are instructed to agree with no division.)

Read Romans 12:16 – Here we are commanded to live in harmony and that there are acceptable differences. Many times the challenges come when we try to make secondary or tertiary (third) items a main principle or point.

Say, Paul reminds us to respect rather than judge. Read Romans 14:1-3

Say, There are some necessary divisions - false teaching and errant theology are two that quickly come to mind (prosperity gospel, works-based gospel, sinful unrepentant lives)

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6 – **Say**, Paul clearly commands believers to keep away from those who have no desire to grow in Christ and are unrepentant. **Ask**, how does that instruction make for awkward conversations? Does anyone remember how Michael preached last Fall on “Thank God It’s Awkward?” What are the benefits to having awkward conversations?

Say, Michael’s final sermon point addressed **Community inside and outside the church**

Say, Inside the church fellowship is expressed by meeting together. **Read** Acts 2:44-46

Say, Community also includes greeting and welcoming former opponents. Restoration is such a large part of God’s desire for believers.

Ask, Read Matthew 28:16-20. How is living out the Great Commission a part of community both inside and outside the church? (Grow in maturity, knowledge of God and make disciples)

Take time to allow participants to share anything prayer requests they may have and close the time in prayer.