

# 40 Weeks of Purpose

Week 17

## A Place to Belong

### POINT TO MEDITATE ABOUT FROM LAST WEEK:

*Life is all about Love.*

Because God IS Love, He is more concerned about how we develop relationships in our lives than anything else that we do.

### VERSE TO MEMORIZE FROM LAST WEEK:

*“The entire law is summed up in a single command: Love your neighbor as yourself” – Galatians 5:14*

The whole purpose of the Law was to get us to Love Our Neighbors... And Christ FULFILLED the Law! We need to also...

### QUESTION TO CONSIDER FROM LAST WEEK:

*How can I ensure that relationships are my first priority?*

Remember what I said to end last week?

- The best use of life is love
- The best expression of love is time
- The best time to love is now
  
- You are called to belong, not just believe
- God said It from the very beginning:
- Genesis 2:18 (NIV)
  - 18) The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”
  
- We are all specifically created to be part of a community, and we cannot fulfill God’s purposes on our own

- Your relationship to Christ needs to be a personal one, but it cannot be a private one
- You are a member of a family, and connected to each member
- Even to the point of you not even being “your own” any longer:

- Romans 12:5 (NLT)

5) So it is with Christ’s body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others.

- Paul doesn’t use this analogy lightly...
  - Think of this as a body, not a building
  - This is a living organism, not an organization
- For organs to work properly, or even survive, they have to be connected to the body
- You will discover your role in life through your relationships with others
  - Avoid forming relationships with others and you avoid fulfilling your purpose
- If an organ is disconnected from the body it will eventually die
  - Disconnected from the Body of Christ, your spiritual life will wither
- The first symptom of spiritual decline is usually inconsistent attendance
- You need to be a member of an Ecclesia as much as the Ecclesia needs you
- Here is SIX Reasons why you need to be a member of an Ecclesia

1) Being in an Ecclesia identifies you as a believer

- It’s true... You simply can’t claim to be a Christian unless you attend meeting

- John 13:35 (NLT)

35) Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

- Bringing all different backgrounds, races and social statuses together is a powerful witness to the Gospel
- You are not the Body of Christ on your own...
  - You need others to be that with you

## 2) Being in an Ecclesia pushes you out of your self-centered life

- The Ecclesia is the classroom for learning how to get along with God's Family
  - It is a lab for practicing unselfish, sympathetic love

### • 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:26 (AMP)

26) And if one member suffers, all the parts share the suffering; if one member is honored, all the members share in the enjoyment of it.

- Only in regular contact with other imperfect believers can we really learn fellowship
- Biblical Fellowship means being as committed to each other as we are to Christ
  - To be as committed to the "least" member as you are to Christ

### • 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:16 (MESSAGE)

16) This is how we've come to understand and experience love: Christ sacrificed his life for us. This is why we ought to live sacrificially for our fellow believers, and not just be out for ourselves.

## 3) Being in an Ecclesia helps you develop spiritual muscle

- You will never grow to maturity just by being a spectator
- The Bible calls us to do many things with "each other"
  - Love each other
  - Pray for each other
  - Encourage each other
  - Admonish each other
  - Greet each other
  - Serve each other
  - Exhort each other
  - Accept each other
  - Teach each other
  - Honor each other

- Bear the Burdens of each other
  - Forgive each other
  - Submit to each other
  - Be Devoted to each other
  - And there are others!
- That is how you grow!
  - It may seem easier to be holy when no one else is around, but that is false holiness
  - It's easy to fool yourself into thinking that you are mature if there is no one there to challenge you
    - Real maturity shows up in Relationships

**4) The Ecclesia needs you**

- Sometimes, it's that simple...
- God chose you for a reason
  - God has a unique role for you to play in His Ecclesia
  - This is called your "Ministry" and it's one of God's Purposes for you
- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:7 (NLT)

7) A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church.

- Your Ecclesia is where you discover, develop and use your gifts

**5) Being in an Ecclesia will allow you to share in Christ's Mission**

- When Jesus walked the Earth, God worked through his Physical Body
- Now that Jesus is with God, they both work through Christ's Spiritual Body
- The Ecclesia is God's instrument on earth to do His will
- We are not simply to model His love to those around us, we are to carry that to the ends of the world
- This is an incredible privilege and a clear commandment

- Mark 16:15-16 (NLT) ¶

- 15) And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere.
- 16) Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.

**6)** Being in an Ecclesia will help keep you from backsliding

- None of us are immune to temptation

- Given the right situation, any of us are capable of sin

- God knows this, so he has placed us in Ecclesias and given us the responsibility of keeping each other on track

- Hebrews 3:13

- 13) But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

- In the Ecclesia, there is no place for a common phrase:

*“Mind your own business”*

- We are called and commanded to be involved in each other’s lives

- If you know someone who is wavering, it is your responsibility to go talk to them

- If someone thinks you are, then you shouldn’t be offended if they come talk to you

- James 5:19 (MESSAGE)

- 19) My dear friends, if you know people who have wandered off from God’s truth, don’t write them off. Go after them. Get them back

- Don’t think you can make it on your own...

- Don’t despise your Brothers and Sisters when they are simply trying to help

- Being a Christian is more than simply being committed to Christ

- Being a Christian is also about being committed to the Body of Christ

- That is why God invented the Ecclesia in the first place... It wasn’t man’s idea

- That is why God has brought you here today!

**POINT TO MEDITATE ABOUT THIS WEEK:**

*I must belong, not just believe.*

**VERSE TO MEMORIZE THIS WEEK:**

*“In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others” – Romans 12:5*

**QUESTION TO CONSIDER THIS WEEK:**

*Does my level of involvement in the Ecclesia demonstrate that I am committed to God’s family?*