

Devoted to Being the Church

Message 02 in the series "Devoted"

A. Our church is more than a meeting or a meeting place. We are the body of Christ.

"...we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we're talking about is Christ's body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn't amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ's body, let's just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren't." Romans 12:4-6 (MSG)

Note: We don't have to strive to become the body of Christ. We are the body of Christ. Our challenge is to act like it.

"...make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." Philippians 2:2-4 (NLT)

B. Three things we need to embrace in order to be the church:

1. Conviction: a firmly held belief that God called into fellowship with Jesus and with each other

"God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought."
1 Corinthians 1:9-10 (NIV)

2. Commitment: dedication to loving our Christian brothers and sisters even when it is difficult

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." Colossians 3:12-14 (NIV)

3. Connection: sharing our lives together

"Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well." 1 Thessalonians 2:8 (NIV)

C. Three objections we need to overcome in order to be the church:

1. "I'm not good enough."

"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure." Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)

"Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God." 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NLT)

2. "I don't know enough."

"There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth." John 16:12-13 (NLT)

"Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives." Colossians 3:16 (NLT)

3. "I don't have enough time."

"...seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:33 (NIV)

"Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track."

Proverbs 3:5-6 (MSG)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why did you get involved in a Connect Group?
2. Share a time in your life when you made a commitment but didn't follow through (diet, budget, devotions, exercise, etc.). How might other believers help you keep future commitments?
3. Discuss Centerpoint's belief statement on the church. "The Church is the body of Christ, created by His Word and Spirit. The Church is not a religious institution, denomination, or building but is made up of all people everywhere and in every time who have surrendered their lives to Christ. The Church exists to worship and glorify God and to serve Him by faithfully doing His will on earth. All members of the church are called to ministry and service." (*Romans 12:4-10, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:11-13*)
4. Read John 16:12-13, Colossians 3:16, & 1 Corinthians 2:13-16. How does it make you feel to know that The Holy Spirit will continue to guide and teach us every day?
5. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:8. What does sharing life with other believers look like?
6. Which of the following objections have you heard people give for not joining a Connect Group?
 - "I'm not good enough."
 - "I don't know enough."
 - "I don't have enough time."

How could you respond to these objections in a positive way?

7. Discuss the following quotations:

"Small groups exist for this: to say things that will keep each other believing." John Piper

"Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still 'today,' so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ." Hebrews 3:12-14 (NLT)

"We are all part of one body, whether we realize it or not. What happens to one of us affects the whole body, whether we realize it or not. The mission of the Church... is not to achieve unity but to act as the unified entity that it is." Mark Alan Powell

8. Spend a few minutes as a group praying for God to bring people to mind who need to be a part of your group. Also ask God to guide everyone in our church to a small group that will allow them to thrive.