

Week 7

Let's talk about family.

We're not talking about family as in those five people who sit together in a potluck. We're talking about the church as a family. The church *is* a family.

START

You are brothers and sisters with every other Christian, whether or not you want to be. We're **adopted brothers and sisters by God**. God chose us to be part of his family, and it's wonderful.

You are in a church family, which includes all the good and bad. Sometimes you get along with everyone and sometimes you don't. It's just like an actual family.

My brother and sister and I, we fought. My kids fight. And sometimes in the church there is a little drama—that's just people being people.

It's good to understand when you're starting a relationship with Christ that the church isn't perfect. It's a family. With all the ups and downs. But one thing's true about families. Families stick together.

Matthew 12:48-50 (ESV) says, *"But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

We're a family. From Jesus' own mouth. Whether you like it or not.

Describe your relationship with your family. Is it something you want to improve upon? If so, how?

Have you ever been to a family reunion? When you go to reunions, you meet people you haven't seen in your whole life—and they pinch your cheeks. It's always a weird conversation. When someone knows you, and you don't know them.

Church can be like that sometimes. You see strangers across the aisle and sort of know them by look. But when you see that same person in the grocery store, you pretend not to, and walk the other way.

Christians don't want to be that type of family. We want to be a family that knows each other. You should work to make the church more familiar, and at least know other people's names.

Go to church next week and introduce yourself to 5 people you don't already know. Do you accept this challenge? YES NO

Not only is a church a family, it's a body. Each part has to work together. There's a job to do as a church. We are called to do something as a united, singular body. We're told in 1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV), "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*" And Romans 12:5 (ESV) says, "*so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*"

When we look at these verses, we learn that the Bible says that we belong to each other. We have to help each other. Part of our job as believers is to be united together in ministry. We were never called to do this alone. I've never found one Bible verse that says, "You are called to do this all by yourself, and no one's going to support you on your journey."

What role do you play in the "church" body?

How often should I meet with my church family?

Sundays is a part of that, but it's only part. In my whole life, in my 40 years, I've seen Christians screw this up all the time. They think church is relegated to Sunday and every other day belongs to them. Incorrect.

Church is when you meet with family.

Hebrews 10:25 (ESV) says, "*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*"

We are supposed to meet regularly together as believers, as a family, as a body. We're not supposed to give up the habit of meeting together on a regular basis. Church is part of that, bible study is part of that, softball teams are part of that—all the activities that we do is part of that. We meet together as family. That's our job. We're called to not give up the habit of doing that.

Acts 2:42-45 (ESV) says, "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.*"

We're supposed to meet together, pray together, and break bread. But your job is often to fulfill the Great Commission. To go into the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded.

How do we do that? We meet together as a family. We pray, we eat, we fellowship, and we share God's teaching with one another.

Acts 1:8 says (ESV), "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

The church was told at the start, they were supposed to meet together, work together, and make Jesus known to the ends of the earth. That's the job of the church. And that's *your* job too.

If we look at the six purposes of the church it's:

1. Teaching the Bible
2. Fellowship
3. Communion
4. Prayer
5. Fulfill Great Commission
6. Take Care of One Another

In our church, when we meet, we eat. We like that "breaking the bread" part.

Acts 2:46-47 (ESV) says, "*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*"

The Early Church exploded because they loved God, and they loved people. First century Christians lived out life together, doing ministry, supporting each other in doing ministry as a family. God rewarded them by helping them see people enter the kingdom day after day after day.

That's what I think is missing from the modern church. Our goal is to get back to a place where we see God actively working in the world around us.

As a church, how are we supposed to act?

Hebrews 10:24 (ESV) says, "*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.*"

We're supposed to push each other. Believers are supposed to impassion each other to go out and love other people and do good works. We should, when talking to each other, say, "That was such a good conversation. I want to go out and conquer the world and tell people about Jesus."

We shouldn't leave conversations. "Oh, I'm so drained. All they did was gossip and complain."

That's not what we're called to do. We're called to stir each other onward.

Do you feel that you "stir others up" to love and do good works? Why or why not?

Honor

Romans 12:10 (NIV) says, "*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*"

Christians are called to honor each other above ourselves. Take the selfishness away from your life. Take the concerns away for what is good for you and focus on what is good for others.

How can you sacrifice your wants and desires so that the Gospel can be made real in people's lives?

That's hard, but that's what you're called to do.

Instruction

Romans 15:14 (NIV) says, *"I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another."*

The church is called to instruct one another. Not just to have one pastor who instructs everyone. We're called to invest in each other's lives—mentor each other. When we're all struggling, we must stand up and help each other through it. This is what parents do for their children. This is what grandparents do for their grandchildren. And this is what we do for friends.

We give each other advice based on the word of God. It doesn't have to come from a pastor or priest. It can come from a mature Christian.

Compassion

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) says, *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

We're called to be compassionate to each other. Not just to the world around us. I've spent enough time with church people to know they're great at loving the people outside of the walls, but sometimes terrible at loving the people inside.

We're supposed to love each other. We're also supposed to forgive each other. It pains me when I sit in counseling and hear someone say, "I've been going to church with this person my whole life, and I've been mad at him for 40 years."

That's a no-no. I learned that at 5 years old. My parents said, "You're going to apologize to your sister or give her a kiss." I always chose to forgive her. You have to forgive.

In life counseling, people ask me for advice. I say, "You have to say the words I'm sorry, will you forgive me, and I apologize." You have to say all three, otherwise people don't accept it. "Well, that sorry doesn't count." Ever hear that before?

Do you use those three phrases? I'm sorry. I apologize. Will you forgive me? If not, why?

That's how it is a lot of times. Unfortunately, this is in and outside the walls of the church. We need to do better. If you're reading this and have not forgiven another brother or sister in Christ, it's on you. It's not on them. Forgiveness is something that's bestowed, not received. We can receive forgiveness, but when it comes to others, we can't say, "You owe me forgiveness."

That's not the way it works. You forgive each other. Just as Christ forgave us.

Exhort

Hebrews 3:13 (ESV) says, "*But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*"

We're supposed to exhort each other every day. Exhort means to strongly encourage or urge someone. You are called to challenge other believers and call each other out when we're not doing something right. We live in a world where there's no personal responsibility for a person's actions. There's no accountability. You can't tell anybody they did something wrong, because they have their own moral standards.

As a believer, the Bible tells us what's right and wrong. We can, lovingly and with compassionate hearts, tell each other where they're going astray and help each other get back on the path.

Fellowship

As Christians, we're called to do **life together**.

Believers need to walk through life together as they do life together. Through the good times and bad times. When someone's sick and hurting, their brothers and sisters in Christ should be their first point of contact. You should yearn to do life together with other people who also love Jesus. Your church family will help you get through the hardest times in your life.

1 Corinthians 12:14-20 (NIV) says, "*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? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*"

Everyone is equally needed in the church. We don't all want to be the ears, or eyes. You all definitely don't want to be the pastor because your hair goes white faster. We don't all want to have the same job because that's boring and there's not enough for us to do.

If God has called you to be a part of a church, he's given you a job to do. Not to sit in a pew and do nothing. Maybe it's connecting with people. That's a great job to have. If you can care for other Christians—wonderful. If it's serving in children's ministry—wonderful. If it's being on a softball team—wonderful.

Find your role because everyone is needed. We're all needed equally.

1 Corinthians 12:21-25 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Each member needs to be present for the body to work.

If you're missing, it's like an arm's cut off. It's harder to do things with one less arm. If you're not active in the body of Christ, there's something missing. You have to determine what part God created you to be. If you are in a role now that doesn't fit, ask God to reveal the role he has for you?

What's your role in the church? Does it fit you? Do you need a new one? If you don't have one, why not?

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Christians rejoice with each other and struggle with each other. It's okay to feel each other's pain. That's what we're called to do. We can also celebrate with each other and we also need to provide for those in need. James 1:27 (NIV) says, *“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”*

Orphans and widows need help and support and food. Whatever it is. You can be a part of that.

What are Sundays for?

Sundays are to glorify God. You're here to glorify God. It is not about you.

89% of Christians surveyed said the purpose of church was to serve them and the needs of their family. Does this sound like the United States? That's a selfish perspective of church.

We have to understand the danger of the 89% of Christians surveyed. That's almost 9 out of 10. Crazy!

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) says, *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Outward reaching focus is a primary role of a local church. Inward equipping the church body is secondary. God never promised that life is going to be fair. Christians don't have to have all the focus on them. We're called to be servants to reach lost people with the message of hope and forgiveness. That's what we should be doing.

In Luke 5:31-32, Jesus himself said, "I came for the sick, not for the healthy."

We're the healthy. Sundays is about coming together as a family, glorifying our Savior. We get that equipping exhortation and then go out into the world to tell people about Jesus. Our life groups helps us with this, our Bible studies, our devotionals, our prayer time, our meals, our softball teams, those all help us.

As we look at the outward reach, it allows people to fulfill the Great Commission, which is our job.

Romans 15:6 (ESV) says, "*that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

When you come through church doors, you're there to glorify God. You're supposed to leave Sunday service ready to fulfill the Great Commission. Not to have God speak to you each week. Not to get through six days so the pastor can say something that must recharge you. If your pastor doesn't recharge me, then maybe this isn't the right church for me *or*, maybe you aren't in the right state of mind to be recharged.

We've got to recalibrate our brains so that Sundays are used to glorify and prepare and equip you to go into the world. You should to leave Sundays spiritually recharged, but for mature believers, the recharging energy should come from giving of yourself—to God and to people and not simply receiving from those sources.

I want to put that on a t-shirt. That's what I truly believe is our job.

John 15:8 (ESV) says, "*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*"

Fruit

You are judged by the spiritual fruit that you bear. When you go into the world, you are charged with sharing the fruit of the spirit with the world around you. How you grow in Christ, Monday through Saturday, is more important than your personal experience on Sundays. You should come on Sundays to give of yourself as an offering.

When you're at church, your spiritual act of worship is to give yourself as an offering. It's part of your entire seven-day teaching and equipping process. Sundays should not be the only time you get into God's word or spend time with God's people. You need to be doing more during the week.

Sunday is never going to be enough. There's no pastor that's going to be that good.

The church has been called to love God and love people. It's a seven-day job.

What does this mean for you personally?

It means you need to be part of a loving and supportive church family. Get plugged in, make relationships, and make family. Go to the movies with someone else from your church family. Have another family over for a cookout. Go camping. Serve together. Go on a mission trip. Invest your time in other church families in your church.

If you do, it will change everything for you. There's joy in having great Christian relationships.

You need to grow in Christ each week through Christ-honoring fellowship, personal study, and bearing fruit. Show people what it looks like to love God and love people.

The last thing, **be present on Sundays and throughout the week.**

How often do you attend Sunday services? _____

Do you think God is pleased with your commitment to his church and his people? Why or why not?

I know how hard it is. There are so many other things you could be doing—like sleeping in or sports. There's lots you can do instead of church, but Christians are called to come together regularly, to glorify God and be a family. Commit to attend church on Sundays. Do it for 30 days. Talk to people and meet people you don't know, and see if it doesn't change your outlook. This kind of fellowship leads to something special--healthy God-honoring relationships.

You can experience God through others.

Are you ready to get invested in a church family?

Don't be one of the 89 percent. Get excited about church and your church family and then Glorify God together.

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Outward reaching focus is a primary role of a local church. Inward equipping the church body is secondary. God never promised that life is going to be fair. Christians don't have to have all the focus on them. We're called to be servants to reach lost people with the message of hope and forgiveness. That's what we should be doing.

In Luke 5:31-32, Jesus himself said, "I came for the sick, not for the healthy."

We're the healthy. Sundays is about coming together as a family, glorifying our Savior. We get that equipping exhortation and then go out into the world to tell people about Jesus. Our life groups helps us with this, our Bible studies, our devotionals, our prayer time, our meals, our softball teams, those all help us.

As we look at the outward reach, it allows people to fulfill the Great Commission, which is our job.

Romans 15:6 (ESV) says, "*that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

When you come through church doors, you're there to glorify God. You're supposed to leave Sunday service ready to fulfill the Great Commission. Not to have God speak to you each week. Not to get through six days so the pastor can say something that must recharge you. If your pastor doesn't recharge me, then maybe this isn't the right church for me *or*, maybe you aren't in the right state of mind to be recharged.

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John 15:8 (ESV) says, "*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*"

Fruit

You are judged by the spiritual fruit that you bear. When you go into the world, you are charged with sharing the fruit of the spirit with the world around you. How you grow in Christ, Monday through Saturday, is more important than your personal experience on Sundays. You should come on Sundays to give of yourself as an offering.

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What does this mean for you personally?

It means you need to be part of a loving and supportive church family. Get plugged in, make relationships, and make family. Go to the movies with someone else from your church family. Have another family over for a cookout. Go camping. Serve together. Go on a mission trip. Invest your time in other church families in your church.

If you do, it will change everything for you. There's joy in having great Christian relationships.

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How often do you attend Sunday services? _____

Do you think God is pleased with your commitment to his church and his people? Why or why not?

I know how hard it is. There are so many other things you could be doing—like sleeping in or sports. There's lots you can do instead of church, but Christians are called to come together regularly, to glorify God and be a family. Commit to attend church on Sundays. Do it for 30 days. Talk to people and meet people you don't know, and see if it doesn't change your outlook. This kind of fellowship leads to something special--healthy God-honoring relationships.

You can experience God through others.

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Let's talk about family.

We're not talking about family as in those five people who sit together in a potluck. We're talking about the church as a family. The church *is* a family.

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You are brothers and sisters with every other Christian, whether or not you want to be. We're **adopted brothers and sisters by God**. God chose us to be part of his family, and it's wonderful.

You are in a church family, which includes all the good and bad. Sometimes you get along with everyone and sometimes you don't. It's just like an actual family.

My brother and sister and I, we fought. My kids fight. And sometimes in the church there is a little drama—that's just people being people.

It's good to understand when you're starting a relationship with Christ that the church isn't perfect. It's a family. With all the ups and downs. But one thing's true about families. Families stick together.

Matthew 12:48-50 (ESV) says, *"But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

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Have you ever been to a family reunion? When you go to reunions, you meet people you haven't seen in your whole life—and they pinch your cheeks. It's always a weird conversation. When someone knows you, and you don't know them.

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Go to church next week and introduce yourself to 5 people you don't already know. Do you accept this challenge? YES NO

Not only is a church a family, it's a body. Each part has to work together. There's a job to do as a church. We are called to do something as a united, singular body. We're told in 1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV), "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*" And Romans 12:5 (ESV) says, "*so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*"

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We're supposed to meet together, pray together, and break bread. But your job is often to fulfill the Great Commission. To go into the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded.

How do we do that? We meet together as a family. We pray, we eat, we fellowship, and we share God's teaching with one another.

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Do you feel that you "stir others up" to love and do good works? Why or why not?

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Romans 12:10 (NIV) says, "*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*"

Christians are called to honor each other above ourselves. Take the selfishness away from your life. Take the concerns away for what is good for you and focus on what is good for others.

How can you sacrifice your wants and desires so that the Gospel can be made real in people's lives?

That's hard, but that's what you're called to do.

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Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) says, *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

We're called to be compassionate to each other. Not just to the world around us. I've spent enough time with church people to know they're great at loving the people outside of the walls, but sometimes terrible at loving the people inside.

We're supposed to love each other. We're also supposed to forgive each other. It pains me when I sit in counseling and hear someone say, "I've been going to church with this person my whole life, and I've been mad at him for 40 years."

That's a no-no. I learned that at 5 years old. My parents said, "You're going to apologize to your sister or give her a kiss." I always chose to forgive her. You have to forgive.

In life counseling, people ask me for advice. I say, "You have to say the words I'm sorry, will you forgive me, and I apologize." You have to say all three, otherwise people don't accept it. "Well, that sorry doesn't count." Ever hear that before?

Do you use those three phrases? I'm sorry. I apologize. Will you forgive me? If not, why?

That's how it is a lot of times. Unfortunately, this is in and outside the walls of the church. We need to do better. If you're reading this and have not forgiven another brother or sister in Christ, it's on you. It's not on them. Forgiveness is something that's bestowed, not received. We can receive forgiveness, but when it comes to others, we can't say, "You owe me forgiveness."

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Hebrews 3:13 (ESV) says, "*But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*"

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As a believer, the Bible tells us what's right and wrong. We can, lovingly and with compassionate hearts, tell each other where they're going astray and help each other get back on the path.

Fellowship

As Christians, we're called to do **life together**.

Believers need to walk through life together as they do life together. Through the good times and bad times. When someone's sick and hurting, their brothers and sisters in Christ should be their first point of contact. You should yearn to do life together with other people who also love Jesus. Your church family will help you get through the hardest times in your life.

1 Corinthians 12:14-20 (NIV) says, "*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? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*"

Everyone is equally needed in the church. We don't all want to be the ears, or eyes. You all definitely don't want to be the pastor because your hair goes white faster. We don't all want to have the same job because that's boring and there's not enough for us to do.

If God has called you to be a part of a church, he's given you a job to do. Not to sit in a pew and do nothing. Maybe it's connecting with people. That's a great job to have. If you can care for other Christians—wonderful. If it's serving in children's ministry—wonderful. If it's being on a softball team—wonderful.

Find your role because everyone is needed. We're all needed equally.

1 Corinthians 12:21-25 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Each member needs to be present for the body to work.

If you're missing, it's like an arm's cut off. It's harder to do things with one less arm. If you're not active in the body of Christ, there's something missing. You have to determine what part God created you to be. If you are in a role now that doesn't fit, ask God to reveal the role he has for you?

What's your role in the church? Does it fit you? Do you need a new one? If you don't have one, why not?

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Christians rejoice with each other and struggle with each other. It's okay to feel each other's pain. That's what we're called to do. We can also celebrate with each other and we also need to provide for those in need. James 1:27 (NIV) says, *“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”*

Orphans and widows need help and support and food. Whatever it is. You can be a part of that.

What are Sundays for?

Sundays are to glorify God. You're here to glorify God. It is not about you.

89% of Christians surveyed said the purpose of church was to serve them and the needs of their family. Does this sound like the United States? That's a selfish perspective of church.

We have to understand the danger of the 89% of Christians surveyed. That's almost 9 out of 10. Crazy!

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Believers need to walk through life together as they do life together. Through the good times and bad times. When someone's sick and hurting, their brothers and sisters in Christ should be their first point of contact. You should yearn to do life together with other people who also love Jesus. Your church family will help you get through the hardest times in your life.

1 Corinthians 12:14-20 (NIV) says, "*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? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*"

Everyone is equally needed in the church. We don't all want to be the ears, or eyes. You all definitely don't want to be the pastor because your hair goes white faster. We don't all want to have the same job because that's boring and there's not enough for us to do.

If God has called you to be a part of a church, he's given you a job to do. Not to sit in a pew and do nothing. Maybe it's connecting with people. That's a great job to have. If you can care for other Christians—wonderful. If it's serving in children's ministry—wonderful. If it's being on a softball team—wonderful.

Find your role because everyone is needed. We're all needed equally.

1 Corinthians 12:21-25 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Each member needs to be present for the body to work.

If you're missing, it's like an arm's cut off. It's harder to do things with one less arm. If you're not active in the body of Christ, there's something missing. You have to determine what part God created you to be. If you are in a role now that doesn't fit, ask God to reveal the role he has for you?

What's your role in the church? Does it fit you? Do you need a new one? If you don't have one, why not?

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Christians rejoice with each other and struggle with each other. It's okay to feel each other's pain. That's what we're called to do. We can also celebrate with each other and we also need to provide for those in need. James 1:27 (NIV) says, *“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”*

Orphans and widows need help and support and food. Whatever it is. You can be a part of that.

What are Sundays for?

Sundays are to glorify God. You're here to glorify God. It is not about you.

89% of Christians surveyed said the purpose of church was to serve them and the needs of their family. Does this sound like the United States? That's a selfish perspective of church.

We have to understand the danger of the 89% of Christians surveyed. That's almost 9 out of 10. Crazy!

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) says, *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Outward reaching focus is a primary role of a local church. Inward equipping the church body is secondary. God never promised that life is going to be fair. Christians don't have to have all the focus on them. We're called to be servants to reach lost people with the message of hope and forgiveness. That's what we should be doing.

In Luke 5:31-32, Jesus himself said, "I came for the sick, not for the healthy."

We're the healthy. Sundays is about coming together as a family, glorifying our Savior. We get that equipping exhortation and then go out into the world to tell people about Jesus. Our life groups helps us with this, our Bible studies, our devotionals, our prayer time, our meals, our softball teams, those all help us.

As we look at the outward reach, it allows people to fulfill the Great Commission, which is our job.

Romans 15:6 (ESV) says, "*that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

When you come through church doors, you're there to glorify God. You're supposed to leave Sunday service ready to fulfill the Great Commission. Not to have God speak to you each week. Not to get through six days so the pastor can say something that must recharge you. If your pastor doesn't recharge me, then maybe this isn't the right church for me *or*, maybe you aren't in the right state of mind to be recharged.

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You are judged by the spiritual fruit that you bear. When you go into the world, you are charged with sharing the fruit of the spirit with the world around you. How you grow in Christ, Monday through Saturday, is more important than your personal experience on Sundays. You should come on Sundays to give of yourself as an offering.

When you're at church, your spiritual act of worship is to give yourself as an offering. It's part of your entire seven-day teaching and equipping process. Sundays should not be the only time you get into God's word or spend time with God's people. You need to be doing more during the week.

Sunday is never going to be enough. There's no pastor that's going to be that good.

The church has been called to love God and love people. It's a seven-day job.

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It means you need to be part of a loving and supportive church family. Get plugged in, make relationships, and make family. Go to the movies with someone else from your church family. Have another family over for a cookout. Go camping. Serve together. Go on a mission trip. Invest your time in other church families in your church.

If you do, it will change everything for you. There's joy in having great Christian relationships.

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How often do you attend Sunday services? _____

Do you think God is pleased with your commitment to his church and his people? Why or why not?

I know how hard it is. There are so many other things you could be doing—like sleeping in or sports. There's lots you can do instead of church, but Christians are called to come together regularly, to glorify God and be a family. Commit to attend church on Sundays. Do it for 30 days. Talk to people and meet people you don't know, and see if it doesn't change your outlook. This kind of fellowship leads to something special--healthy God-honoring relationships.

You can experience God through others.

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Don't be one of the 89 percent. Get excited about church and your church family and then Glorify God together.

Week 7

Let's talk about family.

We're not talking about family as in those five people who sit together in a potluck. We're talking about the church as a family. The church *is* a family.

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You are brothers and sisters with every other Christian, whether or not you want to be. We're **adopted brothers and sisters by God**. God chose us to be part of his family, and it's wonderful.

You are in a church family, which includes all the good and bad. Sometimes you get along with everyone and sometimes you don't. It's just like an actual family.

My brother and sister and I, we fought. My kids fight. And sometimes in the church there is a little drama—that's just people being people.

It's good to understand when you're starting a relationship with Christ that the church isn't perfect. It's a family. With all the ups and downs. But one thing's true about families. Families stick together.

Matthew 12:48-50 (ESV) says, *"But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

We're a family. From Jesus' own mouth. Whether you like it or not.

Describe your relationship with your family. Is it something you want to improve upon? If so, how?

Have you ever been to a family reunion? When you go to reunions, you meet people you haven't seen in your whole life—and they pinch your cheeks. It's always a weird conversation. When someone knows you, and you don't know them.

Church can be like that sometimes. You see strangers across the aisle and sort of know them by look. But when you see that same person in the grocery store, you pretend not to, and walk the other way.

Christians don't want to be that type of family. We want to be a family that knows each other. You should work to make the church more familiar, and at least know other people's names.

Go to church next week and introduce yourself to 5 people you don't already know. Do you accept this challenge? YES NO

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What role do you play in the "church" body?

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Sundays is a part of that, but it's only part. In my whole life, in my 40 years, I've seen Christians screw this up all the time. They think church is relegated to Sunday and every other day belongs to them. Incorrect.

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Hebrews 10:25 (ESV) says, "*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*"

We are supposed to meet regularly together as believers, as a family, as a body. We're not supposed to give up the habit of meeting together on a regular basis. Church is part of that, bible study is part of that, softball teams are part of that—all the activities that we do is part of that. We meet together as family. That's our job. We're called to not give up the habit of doing that.

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We're supposed to meet together, pray together, and break bread. But your job is often to fulfill the Great Commission. To go into the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded.

How do we do that? We meet together as a family. We pray, we eat, we fellowship, and we share God's teaching with one another.

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1. Teaching the Bible
2. Fellowship
3. Communion
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In our church, when we meet, we eat. We like that "breaking the bread" part.

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As a church, how are we supposed to act?

Hebrews 10:24 (ESV) says, "*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.*"

We're supposed to push each other. Believers are supposed to impassion each other to go out and love other people and do good works. We should, when talking to each other, say, "That was such a good conversation. I want to go out and conquer the world and tell people about Jesus."

We shouldn't leave conversations. "Oh, I'm so drained. All they did was gossip and complain."

That's not what we're called to do. We're called to stir each other onward.

Do you feel that you "stir others up" to love and do good works? Why or why not?

Honor

Romans 12:10 (NIV) says, "*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*"

Christians are called to honor each other above ourselves. Take the selfishness away from your life. Take the concerns away for what is good for you and focus on what is good for others.

How can you sacrifice your wants and desires so that the Gospel can be made real in people's lives?

That's hard, but that's what you're called to do.

Instruction

Romans 15:14 (NIV) says, *"I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another."*

The church is called to instruct one another. Not just to have one pastor who instructs everyone. We're called to invest in each other's lives—mentor each other. When we're all struggling, we must stand up and help each other through it. This is what parents do for their children. This is what grandparents do for their grandchildren. And this is what we do for friends.

We give each other advice based on the word of God. It doesn't have to come from a pastor or priest. It can come from a mature Christian.

Compassion

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) says, *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

We're called to be compassionate to each other. Not just to the world around us. I've spent enough time with church people to know they're great at loving the people outside of the walls, but sometimes terrible at loving the people inside.

We're supposed to love each other. We're also supposed to forgive each other. It pains me when I sit in counseling and hear someone say, "I've been going to church with this person my whole life, and I've been mad at him for 40 years."

That's a no-no. I learned that at 5 years old. My parents said, "You're going to apologize to your sister or give her a kiss." I always chose to forgive her. You have to forgive.

In life counseling, people ask me for advice. I say, "You have to say the words I'm sorry, will you forgive me, and I apologize." You have to say all three, otherwise people don't accept it. "Well, that sorry doesn't count." Ever hear that before?

Do you use those three phrases? I'm sorry. I apologize. Will you forgive me? If not, why?

That's how it is a lot of times. Unfortunately, this is in and outside the walls of the church. We need to do better. If you're reading this and have not forgiven another brother or sister in Christ, it's on you. It's not on them. Forgiveness is something that's bestowed, not received. We can receive forgiveness, but when it comes to others, we can't say, "You owe me forgiveness."

That's not the way it works. You forgive each other. Just as Christ forgave us.

Exhort

Hebrews 3:13 (ESV) says, "*But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*"

We're supposed to exhort each other every day. Exhort means to strongly encourage or urge someone. You are called to challenge other believers and call each other out when we're not doing something right. We live in a world where there's no personal responsibility for a person's actions. There's no accountability. You can't tell anybody they did something wrong, because they have their own moral standards.

As a believer, the Bible tells us what's right and wrong. We can, lovingly and with compassionate hearts, tell each other where they're going astray and help each other get back on the path.

Fellowship

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Do you feel that you "stir others up" to love and do good works? Why or why not?

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Romans 12:10 (NIV) says, "*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*"

Christians are called to honor each other above ourselves. Take the selfishness away from your life. Take the concerns away for what is good for you and focus on what is good for others.

How can you sacrifice your wants and desires so that the Gospel can be made real in people's lives?

That's hard, but that's what you're called to do.

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Romans 15:14 (NIV) says, *"I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another."*

The church is called to instruct one another. Not just to have one pastor who instructs everyone. We're called to invest in each other's lives—mentor each other. When we're all struggling, we must stand up and help each other through it. This is what parents do for their children. This is what grandparents do for their grandchildren. And this is what we do for friends.

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We're supposed to love each other. We're also supposed to forgive each other. It pains me when I sit in counseling and hear someone say, "I've been going to church with this person my whole life, and I've been mad at him for 40 years."

That's a no-no. I learned that at 5 years old. My parents said, "You're going to apologize to your sister or give her a kiss." I always chose to forgive her. You have to forgive.

In life counseling, people ask me for advice. I say, "You have to say the words I'm sorry, will you forgive me, and I apologize." You have to say all three, otherwise people don't accept it. "Well, that sorry doesn't count." Ever hear that before?

Do you use those three phrases? I'm sorry. I apologize. Will you forgive me? If not, why?

That's how it is a lot of times. Unfortunately, this is in and outside the walls of the church. We need to do better. If you're reading this and have not forgiven another brother or sister in Christ, it's on you. It's not on them. Forgiveness is something that's bestowed, not received. We can receive forgiveness, but when it comes to others, we can't say, "You owe me forgiveness."

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As a believer, the Bible tells us what's right and wrong. We can, lovingly and with compassionate hearts, tell each other where they're going astray and help each other get back on the path.

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As Christians, we're called to do **life together**.

Believers need to walk through life together as they do life together. Through the good times and bad times. When someone's sick and hurting, their brothers and sisters in Christ should be their first point of contact. You should yearn to do life together with other people who also love Jesus. Your church family will help you get through the hardest times in your life.

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Everyone is equally needed in the church. We don't all want to be the ears, or eyes. You all definitely don't want to be the pastor because your hair goes white faster. We don't all want to have the same job because that's boring and there's not enough for us to do.

If God has called you to be a part of a church, he's given you a job to do. Not to sit in a pew and do nothing. Maybe it's connecting with people. That's a great job to have. If you can care for other Christians—wonderful. If it's serving in children's ministry—wonderful. If it's being on a softball team—wonderful.

Find your role because everyone is needed. We're all needed equally.

1 Corinthians 12:21-25 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Each member needs to be present for the body to work.

If you're missing, it's like an arm's cut off. It's harder to do things with one less arm. If you're not active in the body of Christ, there's something missing. You have to determine what part God created you to be. If you are in a role now that doesn't fit, ask God to reveal the role he has for you?

What's your role in the church? Does it fit you? Do you need a new one? If you don't have one, why not?

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

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Orphans and widows need help and support and food. Whatever it is. You can be a part of that.

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Sundays are to glorify God. You're here to glorify God. It is not about you.

89% of Christians surveyed said the purpose of church was to serve them and the needs of their family. Does this sound like the United States? That's a selfish perspective of church.

We have to understand the danger of the 89% of Christians surveyed. That's almost 9 out of 10. Crazy!

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) says, *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Outward reaching focus is a primary role of a local church. Inward equipping the church body is secondary. God never promised that life is going to be fair. Christians don't have to have all the focus on them. We're called to be servants to reach lost people with the message of hope and forgiveness. That's what we should be doing.

In Luke 5:31-32, Jesus himself said, "I came for the sick, not for the healthy."

We're the healthy. Sundays is about coming together as a family, glorifying our Savior. We get that equipping exhortation and then go out into the world to tell people about Jesus. Our life groups helps us with this, our Bible studies, our devotionals, our prayer time, our meals, our softball teams, those all help us.

As we look at the outward reach, it allows people to fulfill the Great Commission, which is our job.

Romans 15:6 (ESV) says, "*that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

When you come through church doors, you're there to glorify God. You're supposed to leave Sunday service ready to fulfill the Great Commission. Not to have God speak to you each week. Not to get through six days so the pastor can say something that must recharge you. If your pastor doesn't recharge me, then maybe this isn't the right church for me *or*, maybe you aren't in the right state of mind to be recharged.

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I want to put that on a t-shirt. That's what I truly believe is our job.

John 15:8 (ESV) says, "*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*"

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You are judged by the spiritual fruit that you bear. When you go into the world, you are charged with sharing the fruit of the spirit with the world around you. How you grow in Christ, Monday through Saturday, is more important than your personal experience on Sundays. You should come on Sundays to give of yourself as an offering.

When you're at church, your spiritual act of worship is to give yourself as an offering. It's part of your entire seven-day teaching and equipping process. Sundays should not be the only time you get into God's word or spend time with God's people. You need to be doing more during the week.

Sunday is never going to be enough. There's no pastor that's going to be that good.

The church has been called to love God and love people. It's a seven-day job.

What does this mean for you personally?

It means you need to be part of a loving and supportive church family. Get plugged in, make relationships, and make family. Go to the movies with someone else from your church family. Have another family over for a cookout. Go camping. Serve together. Go on a mission trip. Invest your time in other church families in your church.

If you do, it will change everything for you. There's joy in having great Christian relationships.

You need to grow in Christ each week through Christ-honoring fellowship, personal study, and bearing fruit. Show people what it looks like to love God and love people.

The last thing, **be present on Sundays and throughout the week.**

How often do you attend Sunday services? _____

Do you think God is pleased with your commitment to his church and his people? Why or why not?

I know how hard it is. There are so many other things you could be doing—like sleeping in or sports. There's lots you can do instead of church, but Christians are called to come together regularly, to glorify God and be a family. Commit to attend church on Sundays. Do it for 30 days. Talk to people and meet people you don't know, and see if it doesn't change your outlook. This kind of fellowship leads to something special--healthy God-honoring relationships.

You can experience God through others.

Are you ready to get invested in a church family?

Don't be one of the 89 percent. Get excited about church and your church family and then Glorify God together.

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Let's talk about family.

We're not talking about family as in those five people who sit together in a potluck. We're talking about the church as a family. The church *is* a family.

START

You are brothers and sisters with every other Christian, whether or not you want to be. We're **adopted brothers and sisters by God**. God chose us to be part of his family, and it's wonderful.

You are in a church family, which includes all the good and bad. Sometimes you get along with everyone and sometimes you don't. It's just like an actual family.

My brother and sister and I, we fought. My kids fight. And sometimes in the church there is a little drama—that's just people being people.

It's good to understand when you're starting a relationship with Christ that the church isn't perfect. It's a family. With all the ups and downs. But one thing's true about families. Families stick together.

Matthew 12:48-50 (ESV) says, *"But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

We're a family. From Jesus' own mouth. Whether you like it or not.

Describe your relationship with your family. Is it something you want to improve upon? If so, how?

Have you ever been to a family reunion? When you go to reunions, you meet people you haven't seen in your whole life—and they pinch your cheeks. It's always a weird conversation. When someone knows you, and you don't know them.

Church can be like that sometimes. You see strangers across the aisle and sort of know them by look. But when you see that same person in the grocery store, you pretend not to, and walk the other way.

Christians don't want to be that type of family. We want to be a family that knows each other. You should work to make the church more familiar, and at least know other people's names.

Go to church next week and introduce yourself to 5 people you don't already know. Do you accept this challenge? YES NO

Not only is a church a family, it's a body. Each part has to work together. There's a job to do as a church. We are called to do something as a united, singular body. We're told in 1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV), "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*" And Romans 12:5 (ESV) says, "*so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*"

When we look at these verses, we learn that the Bible says that we belong to each other. We have to help each other. Part of our job as believers is to be united together in ministry. We were never called to do this alone. I've never found one Bible verse that says, "You are called to do this all by yourself, and no one's going to support you on your journey."

What role do you play in the "church" body?

How often should I meet with my church family?

Sundays is a part of that, but it's only part. In my whole life, in my 40 years, I've seen Christians screw this up all the time. They think church is relegated to Sunday and every other day belongs to them. Incorrect.

Church is when you meet with family.

Hebrews 10:25 (ESV) says, "*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*"

We are supposed to meet regularly together as believers, as a family, as a body. We're not supposed to give up the habit of meeting together on a regular basis. Church is part of that, bible study is part of that, softball teams are part of that—all the activities that we do is part of that. We meet together as family. That's our job. We're called to not give up the habit of doing that.

Acts 2:42-45 (ESV) says, "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.*"

We're supposed to meet together, pray together, and break bread. But your job is often to fulfill the Great Commission. To go into the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded.

How do we do that? We meet together as a family. We pray, we eat, we fellowship, and we share God's teaching with one another.

Acts 1:8 says (ESV), "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

The church was told at the start, they were supposed to meet together, work together, and make Jesus known to the ends of the earth. That's the job of the church. And that's *your* job too.

If we look at the six purposes of the church it's:

1. Teaching the Bible
2. Fellowship
3. Communion
4. Prayer
5. Fulfill Great Commission
6. Take Care of One Another

In our church, when we meet, we eat. We like that "breaking the bread" part.

Acts 2:46-47 (ESV) says, "*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*"

The Early Church exploded because they loved God, and they loved people. First century Christians lived out life together, doing ministry, supporting each other in doing ministry as a family. God rewarded them by helping them see people enter the kingdom day after day after day.

That's what I think is missing from the modern church. Our goal is to get back to a place where we see God actively working in the world around us.

As a church, how are we supposed to act?

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Not only is a church a family, it's a body. Each part has to work together. There's a job to do as a church. We are called to do something as a united, singular body. We're told in 1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV), "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*" And Romans 12:5 (ESV) says, "*so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*"

When we look at these verses, we learn that the Bible says that we belong to each other. We have to help each other. Part of our job as believers is to be united together in ministry. We were never called to do this alone. I've never found one Bible verse that says, "You are called to do this all by yourself, and no one's going to support you on your journey."

What role do you play in the "church" body?

How often should I meet with my church family?

Sundays is a part of that, but it's only part. In my whole life, in my 40 years, I've seen Christians screw this up all the time. They think church is relegated to Sunday and every other day belongs to them. Incorrect.

Church is when you meet with family.

Hebrews 10:25 (ESV) says, "*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*"

We are supposed to meet regularly together as believers, as a family, as a body. We're not supposed to give up the habit of meeting together on a regular basis. Church is part of that, bible study is part of that, softball teams are part of that—all the activities that we do is part of that. We meet together as family. That's our job. We're called to not give up the habit of doing that.

Acts 2:42-45 (ESV) says, "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.*"

We're supposed to meet together, pray together, and break bread. But your job is often to fulfill the Great Commission. To go into the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded.

How do we do that? We meet together as a family. We pray, we eat, we fellowship, and we share God's teaching with one another.

Acts 1:8 says (ESV), "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

The church was told at the start, they were supposed to meet together, work together, and make Jesus known to the ends of the earth. That's the job of the church. And that's *your* job too.

If we look at the six purposes of the church it's:

1. Teaching the Bible
2. Fellowship
3. Communion
4. Prayer
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6. Take Care of One Another

In our church, when we meet, we eat. We like that "breaking the bread" part.

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Do you feel that you "stir others up" to love and do good works? Why or why not?

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Romans 12:10 (NIV) says, "*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*"

Christians are called to honor each other above ourselves. Take the selfishness away from your life. Take the concerns away for what is good for you and focus on what is good for others.

How can you sacrifice your wants and desires so that the Gospel can be made real in people's lives?

That's hard, but that's what you're called to do.

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Romans 15:14 (NIV) says, *"I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another."*

The church is called to instruct one another. Not just to have one pastor who instructs everyone. We're called to invest in each other's lives—mentor each other. When we're all struggling, we must stand up and help each other through it. This is what parents do for their children. This is what grandparents do for their grandchildren. And this is what we do for friends.

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Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) says, *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

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Do you use those three phrases? I'm sorry. I apologize. Will you forgive me? If not, why?

That's how it is a lot of times. Unfortunately, this is in and outside the walls of the church. We need to do better. If you're reading this and have not forgiven another brother or sister in Christ, it's on you. It's not on them. Forgiveness is something that's bestowed, not received. We can receive forgiveness, but when it comes to others, we can't say, "You owe me forgiveness."

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As a believer, the Bible tells us what's right and wrong. We can, lovingly and with compassionate hearts, tell each other where they're going astray and help each other get back on the path.

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As Christians, we're called to do **life together**.

Believers need to walk through life together as they do life together. Through the good times and bad times. When someone's sick and hurting, their brothers and sisters in Christ should be their first point of contact. You should yearn to do life together with other people who also love Jesus. Your church family will help you get through the hardest times in your life.

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Find your role because everyone is needed. We're all needed equally.

1 Corinthians 12:21-25 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Each member needs to be present for the body to work.

If you're missing, it's like an arm's cut off. It's harder to do things with one less arm. If you're not active in the body of Christ, there's something missing. You have to determine what part God created you to be. If you are in a role now that doesn't fit, ask God to reveal the role he has for you?

What's your role in the church? Does it fit you? Do you need a new one? If you don't have one, why not?

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Christians rejoice with each other and struggle with each other. It's okay to feel each other's pain. That's what we're called to do. We can also celebrate with each other and we also need to provide for those in need. James 1:27 (NIV) says, *“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”*

Orphans and widows need help and support and food. Whatever it is. You can be a part of that.

What are Sundays for?

Sundays are to glorify God. You're here to glorify God. It is not about you.

89% of Christians surveyed said the purpose of church was to serve them and the needs of their family. Does this sound like the United States? That's a selfish perspective of church.

We have to understand the danger of the 89% of Christians surveyed. That's almost 9 out of 10. Crazy!

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) says, *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Outward reaching focus is a primary role of a local church. Inward equipping the church body is secondary. God never promised that life is going to be fair. Christians don't have to have all the focus on them. We're called to be servants to reach lost people with the message of hope and forgiveness. That's what we should be doing.

In Luke 5:31-32, Jesus himself said, "I came for the sick, not for the healthy."

We're the healthy. Sundays is about coming together as a family, glorifying our Savior. We get that equipping exhortation and then go out into the world to tell people about Jesus. Our life groups helps us with this, our Bible studies, our devotionals, our prayer time, our meals, our softball teams, those all help us.

As we look at the outward reach, it allows people to fulfill the Great Commission, which is our job.

Romans 15:6 (ESV) says, "*that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

When you come through church doors, you're there to glorify God. You're supposed to leave Sunday service ready to fulfill the Great Commission. Not to have God speak to you each week. Not to get through six days so the pastor can say something that must recharge you. If your pastor doesn't recharge me, then maybe this isn't the right church for me *or*, maybe you aren't in the right state of mind to be recharged.

We've got to recalibrate our brains so that Sundays are used to glorify and prepare and equip you to go into the world. You should to leave Sundays spiritually recharged, but for mature believers, the recharging energy should come from giving of yourself—to God and to people and not simply receiving from those sources.

I want to put that on a t-shirt. That's what I truly believe is our job.

John 15:8 (ESV) says, "*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*"

Fruit

You are judged by the spiritual fruit that you bear. When you go into the world, you are charged with sharing the fruit of the spirit with the world around you. How you grow in Christ, Monday through Saturday, is more important than your personal experience on Sundays. You should come on Sundays to give of yourself as an offering.

When you're at church, your spiritual act of worship is to give yourself as an offering. It's part of your entire seven-day teaching and equipping process. Sundays should not be the only time you get into God's word or spend time with God's people. You need to be doing more during the week.

Sunday is never going to be enough. There's no pastor that's going to be that good.

The church has been called to love God and love people. It's a seven-day job.

What does this mean for you personally?

It means you need to be part of a loving and supportive church family. Get plugged in, make relationships, and make family. Go to the movies with someone else from your church family. Have another family over for a cookout. Go camping. Serve together. Go on a mission trip. Invest your time in other church families in your church.

If you do, it will change everything for you. There's joy in having great Christian relationships.

You need to grow in Christ each week through Christ-honoring fellowship, personal study, and bearing fruit. Show people what it looks like to love God and love people.

The last thing, **be present on Sundays and throughout the week.**

How often do you attend Sunday services? _____

Do you think God is pleased with your commitment to his church and his people? Why or why not?

I know how hard it is. There are so many other things you could be doing—like sleeping in or sports. There's lots you can do instead of church, but Christians are called to come together regularly, to glorify God and be a family. Commit to attend church on Sundays. Do it for 30 days. Talk to people and meet people you don't know, and see if it doesn't change your outlook. This kind of fellowship leads to something special--healthy God-honoring relationships.

You can experience God through others.

Are you ready to get invested in a church family?

Don't be one of the 89 percent. Get excited about church and your church family and then Glorify God together.

Week 7

Let's talk about family.

We're not talking about family as in those five people who sit together in a potluck. We're talking about the church as a family. The church *is* a family.

START

You are brothers and sisters with every other Christian, whether or not you want to be. We're **adopted brothers and sisters by God**. God chose us to be part of his family, and it's wonderful.

You are in a church family, which includes all the good and bad. Sometimes you get along with everyone and sometimes you don't. It's just like an actual family.

My brother and sister and I, we fought. My kids fight. And sometimes in the church there is a little drama—that's just people being people.

It's good to understand when you're starting a relationship with Christ that the church isn't perfect. It's a family. With all the ups and downs. But one thing's true about families. Families stick together.

Matthew 12:48-50 (ESV) says, *"But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

We're a family. From Jesus' own mouth. Whether you like it or not.

Describe your relationship with your family. Is it something you want to improve upon? If so, how?

Have you ever been to a family reunion? When you go to reunions, you meet people you haven't seen in your whole life—and they pinch your cheeks. It's always a weird conversation. When someone knows you, and you don't know them.

Church can be like that sometimes. You see strangers across the aisle and sort of know them by look. But when you see that same person in the grocery store, you pretend not to, and walk the other way.

Christians don't want to be that type of family. We want to be a family that knows each other. You should work to make the church more familiar, and at least know other people's names.

Go to church next week and introduce yourself to 5 people you don't already know. Do you accept this challenge? YES NO

Not only is a church a family, it's a body. Each part has to work together. There's a job to do as a church. We are called to do something as a united, singular body. We're told in 1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV), "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*" And Romans 12:5 (ESV) says, "*so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*"

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Fruit

You are judged by the spiritual fruit that you bear. When you go into the world, you are charged with sharing the fruit of the spirit with the world around you. How you grow in Christ, Monday through Saturday, is more important than your personal experience on Sundays. You should come on Sundays to give of yourself as an offering.

When you're at church, your spiritual act of worship is to give yourself as an offering. It's part of your entire seven-day teaching and equipping process. Sundays should not be the only time you get into God's word or spend time with God's people. You need to be doing more during the week.

Sunday is never going to be enough. There's no pastor that's going to be that good.

The church has been called to love God and love people. It's a seven-day job.

What does this mean for you personally?

It means you need to be part of a loving and supportive church family. Get plugged in, make relationships, and make family. Go to the movies with someone else from your church family. Have another family over for a cookout. Go camping. Serve together. Go on a mission trip. Invest your time in other church families in your church.

If you do, it will change everything for you. There's joy in having great Christian relationships.

You need to grow in Christ each week through Christ-honoring fellowship, personal study, and bearing fruit. Show people what it looks like to love God and love people.

The last thing, **be present on Sundays and throughout the week.**

How often do you attend Sunday services? _____

Do you think God is pleased with your commitment to his church and his people? Why or why not?

I know how hard it is. There are so many other things you could be doing—like sleeping in or sports. There's lots you can do instead of church, but Christians are called to come together regularly, to glorify God and be a family. Commit to attend church on Sundays. Do it for 30 days. Talk to people and meet people you don't know, and see if it doesn't change your outlook. This kind of fellowship leads to something special--healthy God-honoring relationships.

You can experience God through others.

Are you ready to get invested in a church family?

Don't be one of the 89 percent. Get excited about church and your church family and then Glorify God together.

Week 7

Let's talk about family.

We're not talking about family as in those five people who sit together in a potluck. We're talking about the church as a family. The church *is* a family.

START

You are brothers and sisters with every other Christian, whether or not you want to be. We're **adopted brothers and sisters by God**. God chose us to be part of his family, and it's wonderful.

You are in a church family, which includes all the good and bad. Sometimes you get along with everyone and sometimes you don't. It's just like an actual family.

My brother and sister and I, we fought. My kids fight. And sometimes in the church there is a little drama—that's just people being people.

It's good to understand when you're starting a relationship with Christ that the church isn't perfect. It's a family. With all the ups and downs. But one thing's true about families. Families stick together.

Matthew 12:48-50 (ESV) says, *"But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

We're a family. From Jesus' own mouth. Whether you like it or not.

Describe your relationship with your family. Is it something you want to improve upon? If so, how?

Have you ever been to a family reunion? When you go to reunions, you meet people you haven't seen in your whole life—and they pinch your cheeks. It's always a weird conversation. When someone knows you, and you don't know them.

Church can be like that sometimes. You see strangers across the aisle and sort of know them by look. But when you see that same person in the grocery store, you pretend not to, and walk the other way.

Christians don't want to be that type of family. We want to be a family that knows each other. You should work to make the church more familiar, and at least know other people's names.

Go to church next week and introduce yourself to 5 people you don't already know. Do you accept this challenge? YES NO

Not only is a church a family, it's a body. Each part has to work together. There's a job to do as a church. We are called to do something as a united, singular body. We're told in 1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV), "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.*" And Romans 12:5 (ESV) says, "*so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*"

When we look at these verses, we learn that the Bible says that we belong to each other. We have to help each other. Part of our job as believers is to be united together in ministry. We were never called to do this alone. I've never found one Bible verse that says, "You are called to do this all by yourself, and no one's going to support you on your journey."

What role do you play in the "church" body?

How often should I meet with my church family?

Sundays is a part of that, but it's only part. In my whole life, in my 40 years, I've seen Christians screw this up all the time. They think church is relegated to Sunday and every other day belongs to them. Incorrect.

Church is when you meet with family.

Hebrews 10:25 (ESV) says, "*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*"

We are supposed to meet regularly together as believers, as a family, as a body. We're not supposed to give up the habit of meeting together on a regular basis. Church is part of that, bible study is part of that, softball teams are part of that—all the activities that we do is part of that. We meet together as family. That's our job. We're called to not give up the habit of doing that.

Acts 2:42-45 (ESV) says, "*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.*"

We're supposed to meet together, pray together, and break bread. But your job is often to fulfill the Great Commission. To go into the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything Christ commanded.

How do we do that? We meet together as a family. We pray, we eat, we fellowship, and we share God's teaching with one another.

Acts 1:8 says (ESV), "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

The church was told at the start, they were supposed to meet together, work together, and make Jesus known to the ends of the earth. That's the job of the church. And that's *your* job too.

If we look at the six purposes of the church it's:

1. Teaching the Bible
2. Fellowship
3. Communion
4. Prayer
5. Fulfill Great Commission
6. Take Care of One Another

In our church, when we meet, we eat. We like that "breaking the bread" part.

Acts 2:46-47 (ESV) says, "*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*"

The Early Church exploded because they loved God, and they loved people. First century Christians lived out life together, doing ministry, supporting each other in doing ministry as a family. God rewarded them by helping them see people enter the kingdom day after day after day.

That's what I think is missing from the modern church. Our goal is to get back to a place where we see God actively working in the world around us.

As a church, how are we supposed to act?

Hebrews 10:24 (ESV) says, "*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.*"

We're supposed to push each other. Believers are supposed to impassion each other to go out and love other people and do good works. We should, when talking to each other, say, "That was such a good conversation. I want to go out and conquer the world and tell people about Jesus."

We shouldn't leave conversations. "Oh, I'm so drained. All they did was gossip and complain."

That's not what we're called to do. We're called to stir each other onward.

Do you feel that you "stir others up" to love and do good works? Why or why not?

Honor

Romans 12:10 (NIV) says, "*Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*"

Christians are called to honor each other above ourselves. Take the selfishness away from your life. Take the concerns away for what is good for you and focus on what is good for others.

How can you sacrifice your wants and desires so that the Gospel can be made real in people's lives?

That's hard, but that's what you're called to do.

Instruction

Romans 15:14 (NIV) says, *"I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another."*

The church is called to instruct one another. Not just to have one pastor who instructs everyone. We're called to invest in each other's lives—mentor each other. When we're all struggling, we must stand up and help each other through it. This is what parents do for their children. This is what grandparents do for their grandchildren. And this is what we do for friends.

We give each other advice based on the word of God. It doesn't have to come from a pastor or priest. It can come from a mature Christian.

Compassion

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) says, *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

We're called to be compassionate to each other. Not just to the world around us. I've spent enough time with church people to know they're great at loving the people outside of the walls, but sometimes terrible at loving the people inside.

We're supposed to love each other. We're also supposed to forgive each other. It pains me when I sit in counseling and hear someone say, "I've been going to church with this person my whole life, and I've been mad at him for 40 years."

That's a no-no. I learned that at 5 years old. My parents said, "You're going to apologize to your sister or give her a kiss." I always chose to forgive her. You have to forgive.

In life counseling, people ask me for advice. I say, "You have to say the words I'm sorry, will you forgive me, and I apologize." You have to say all three, otherwise people don't accept it. "Well, that sorry doesn't count." Ever hear that before?

Do you use those three phrases? I'm sorry. I apologize. Will you forgive me? If not, why?

That's how it is a lot of times. Unfortunately, this is in and outside the walls of the church. We need to do better. If you're reading this and have not forgiven another brother or sister in Christ, it's on you. It's not on them. Forgiveness is something that's bestowed, not received. We can receive forgiveness, but when it comes to others, we can't say, "You owe me forgiveness."

That's not the way it works. You forgive each other. Just as Christ forgave us.

Exhort

Hebrews 3:13 (ESV) says, "*But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*"

We're supposed to exhort each other every day. Exhort means to strongly encourage or urge someone. You are called to challenge other believers and call each other out when we're not doing something right. We live in a world where there's no personal responsibility for a person's actions. There's no accountability. You can't tell anybody they did something wrong, because they have their own moral standards.

As a believer, the Bible tells us what's right and wrong. We can, lovingly and with compassionate hearts, tell each other where they're going astray and help each other get back on the path.

Fellowship

As Christians, we're called to do **life together**.

Believers need to walk through life together as they do life together. Through the good times and bad times. When someone's sick and hurting, their brothers and sisters in Christ should be their first point of contact. You should yearn to do life together with other people who also love Jesus. Your church family will help you get through the hardest times in your life.

1 Corinthians 12:14-20 (NIV) says, "*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? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.*"

Everyone is equally needed in the church. We don't all want to be the ears, or eyes. You all definitely don't want to be the pastor because your hair goes white faster. We don't all want to have the same job because that's boring and there's not enough for us to do.

If God has called you to be a part of a church, he's given you a job to do. Not to sit in a pew and do nothing. Maybe it's connecting with people. That's a great job to have. If you can care for other Christians—wonderful. If it's serving in children's ministry—wonderful. If it's being on a softball team—wonderful.

Find your role because everyone is needed. We're all needed equally.

1 Corinthians 12:21-25 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Each member needs to be present for the body to work.

If you're missing, it's like an arm's cut off. It's harder to do things with one less arm. If you're not active in the body of Christ, there's something missing. You have to determine what part God created you to be. If you are in a role now that doesn't fit, ask God to reveal the role he has for you?

What's your role in the church? Does it fit you? Do you need a new one? If you don't have one, why not?

1 Corinthians 12:26-27 (NIV) says, *“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.”*

Christians rejoice with each other and struggle with each other. It's okay to feel each other's pain. That's what we're called to do. We can also celebrate with each other and we also need to provide for those in need. James 1:27 (NIV) says, *“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”*

Orphans and widows need help and support and food. Whatever it is. You can be a part of that.

What are Sundays for?

Sundays are to glorify God. You're here to glorify God. It is not about you.

89% of Christians surveyed said the purpose of church was to serve them and the needs of their family. Does this sound like the United States? That's a selfish perspective of church.

We have to understand the danger of the 89% of Christians surveyed. That's almost 9 out of 10. Crazy!

Philippians 2:3-4 (ESV) says, *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

Outward reaching focus is a primary role of a local church. Inward equipping the church body is secondary. God never promised that life is going to be fair. Christians don't have to have all the focus on them. We're called to be servants to reach lost people with the message of hope and forgiveness. That's what we should be doing.

In Luke 5:31-32, Jesus himself said, "I came for the sick, not for the healthy."

We're the healthy. Sundays is about coming together as a family, glorifying our Savior. We get that equipping exhortation and then go out into the world to tell people about Jesus. Our life groups helps us with this, our Bible studies, our devotionals, our prayer time, our meals, our softball teams, those all help us.

As we look at the outward reach, it allows people to fulfill the Great Commission, which is our job.

Romans 15:6 (ESV) says, "*that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

When you come through church doors, you're there to glorify God. You're supposed to leave Sunday service ready to fulfill the Great Commission. Not to have God speak to you each week. Not to get through six days so the pastor can say something that must recharge you. If your pastor doesn't recharge me, then maybe this isn't the right church for me *or*, maybe you aren't in the right state of mind to be recharged.

We've got to recalibrate our brains so that Sundays are used to glorify and prepare and equip you to go into the world. You should to leave Sundays spiritually recharged, but for mature believers, the recharging energy should come from giving of yourself—to God and to people and not simply receiving from those sources.

I want to put that on a t-shirt. That's what I truly believe is our job.

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