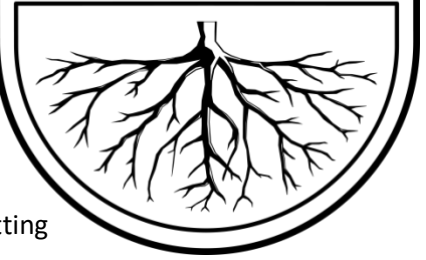




CONTEXT AND CLARIFICATION

HEALTHY CHURCH – Members

LIFE GROUPS



Question #4) This is one trait that is missing among today's church members. As Christians, we should be known for our hospitality. Do you not open your home because you live far away? You don't want to or don't know how to "entertain." You are embarrassed because of your family, the stained carpet or sink filled with dishes? Let us continue to learn how to become hospitable to our church family and our neighbors. (sometimes it's as simple as getting rid of clutter and cleaning up). Start somewhere.

Question #5) Gossip and complaining destroys unity. Many individuals will commit to not gossip or complain. But can you be a committed church member who corrects gossip and complaining? "It's too cold in the sanctuary," "They don't sing the songs I like," "The sermon was too long this Sunday." The root of complaining is entitlement and selfishness. It's not about YOU. Gossip is dangerous also because it gives a false sense of connection to those who participate. Instead of connecting over truth, transparency and vulnerability, people talk about other people. Correcting gossip is difficult. I personally say "I'm going to interrupt you. If someone ever came to me and shared things about you, I would tell them stop. So please stop sharing this with me." Or as pastor Jeremiah shared before, ask them, "Why are you telling me this?" Most things that threaten the unity of the church can be fixed by reminding church members to be Gospel-focused.

Question #6) Our strategy is Worship, Grow, Give, Serve. In that order. Thom S. Rainer writes "First, the health of the church is directly tied to the health of groups in the church. If you are not in a small group...you are not contributing to the health of the church. Indeed, you are not doing all you should be doing for your own spiritual health. Though we grow spiritually in our own personal devotional time, we also grow in community with others. A healthy church will inevitably have a large percentage of its worship attendance in groups."

Question #7) This is the time your Life Group can begin planning an outreach or event for October 31st. People ask me "Why aren't we doing a trunk or treat or a block party for Halloween?" My response is simple: Life Groups. Do something together as a Life Group! Your group may already have plans that evening. Maybe commit to serving together another way. Toilets always need cleaning; weeds always need pulling. If you look for an opportunity to serve, you will find one.

Question #8) Every effort should be made to reach out to the wandering sheep of the flock. Yet, we do an injustice by not removing individuals from membership when they have not even attended a worship service in years. If you are a member of the body, we must hold each other accountable.



LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

Ice Breaker: When did you become a member of South Peoria?

- 1) What was your biggest takeaway from Sunday's sermon?
- 2) How do you pray for the church?
- 3) What are some actions and attitudes you find in healthy church members?
- 4) When was the last time you intentionally opened up your home to your church family? Why?
- 5) Ephesians 4:2-3. What things threaten the unity of the church? How can you protect the bride against disunity?
- 6) What are some reasons that people, who are not in a small group, drop out of church within 5 years? How does God transform hearts and souls through Life Groups differently than Sunday morning worship?
- 7) Read Romans 12:3-8. Where do you enjoy serving at South Peoria? Why? How could your Life Group serve together?
- 8) The potential edits in the church's by-laws were changed from "Non-Active Member" to "Member Not In Good Standing." Why is this small change in words important? What are the dangers of having someone maintain church membership without church involvement?
- 9) Read John 13:34-35. What steps do you need to take to develop deep and meaningful relationships with other Christians?
- 10) After listening to Sunday's sermon and participating in this Life Group, what is one thing you know you God is calling you to do before we meet again?



FURTHER STUDY

Acts 2:46-47 (NIV)

⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:9-10 (NIV)

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

“You as a church member should be committed to being a part of a small group in your church. Let me be clear. If you are not in a small group...you are not fully committed to your church. You are a marginal or peripheral member. You may be in the larger gathering of corporate worship, but you are not in community.” –Thom S. Rainer

“Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him.” –Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“Community is an instrument of worship, a weapon against sin, and a tool for evangelism—all for the exaltation of Jesus.” –Brad House



