

LIVING VALUES: The Foundation of our Ministry

(Romans 12:1-5; 9-13 Ephesians 2:17-19;)

Choice: some of the most important aspects of our lives, we had NO choice in whatsoever: when we were born; who were our parents; who are our siblings; the color of our hair/eyes/the pigment of our skin; which lang. we would speak; if we would be born in poverty or wealth; if we would be loved & supported or abused and neglected; if we were born into a Christian family or an atheistic family or a buddhist family; -BUT friends, conc. Your CHURCH FAMILY- **you do have a choice!** (the Lord does not give us the option of NOT going to Church Heb. 10:25; but He gives us options as to where we go to church) – you get to CHOOSE this NEW family, a biblical community of like-minded Believers – a family of faith – a local church family. The WELL???

(Who is the WELL? Where are we going? What do we believe? What are we passionate about?)

- What is God's **Mission** for the Church? **Loving God others as we make disciples of all people.**
- What is God's **Vision** for the WELL? **Thirsty Souls Restored, lives changed, and joyful people worshipping Christ.**
- **What are the LIVING VALUES that will guide the WELL to accomplish our Vision?**
How do we accomplish the vision? 5 Key Values that are our ministry foundation = to accomplish Vision
we will: #1. Preach the Word of God as true, authoritative, and applicable to all areas of life and faith
=(we will preach, teach, and devotionally disciple people to know, love, and share God's Word)
- We will Devote ourselves to Prayer to undergird every decision in church life.
- **TODAY: Be a healthy Family, welcoming, diverse, authentic, and forgiving, while striving to love well and help one another flourish in the gospel.**
- Be a church of servant-leaders, rendering faithful **Service** to those within and outside the church as we steward all of God's gifts in our lives.
- Pursue **Unity** as a church family to accomplish God's purposes in our community, loving each other in a broken & hurting world. *These are our core values at the WELL: Bible, prayer, family, service, & unity

VALUE #3: We will Be a healthy Family, welcoming, diverse, authentic, and forgiving, while striving to love well and help one another flourish in the gospel.

Main Point: As a Believer in Christ, your spiritual growth and ability to rightly glorify God is tied to your spiritual connection to a local Body of Believers (can't have a spiritual connection w/o relationships & cannot have relationships w/o connecting with them in person)

READ Romans 12:1-5, 9-13

“Therefore I urge you, **brothers and sisters**, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, ^[a]acceptable to God, *which is your* ^[b]spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this ^[c]world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may ^[d]prove what the will of God is, that which is good and ^[e]acceptable and perfect.³ For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.⁴ For just as we have many parts in one body and all ^[f]the body's parts do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and **individually parts of one another**. Vs. 9: Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.=we are connected to each other by Christ. =members/family

***The nature of family is that it is messy.** Because families do life everyday together, we know each other intimately (the good stuff and the bad); At times we love each other well and at times we disagree with one another; we argue with one another; we even hurt each other with our words or actions. Families are our testing ground to learn how to forgive one another, to forgive those we love. **Church Life is the same.** In our **Christian family**, we must learn to get along, to strive for unity, to foster grace, to model forgiveness and patience, and show the world – that we have something to offer through Jesus Christ that it is missing.

Imagine in the first century Jerusalem – 8k people saved in three weeks. Huge house Church =Jews & Gentiles together for first time as Christians under one roof. Diff. lang., culture, customs, dress, worldviews, expectations

Galatians 3:26-29 “For you are **all** sons *and daughters* of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither

slave nor free, there is ^[ak]neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you ^[ab]belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's ^[am]descendants, heirs according to promise." Christ is the great equalizer.

-We are ALL equally sinful and in need of salvation (no one is exempt)

-We who are now saved are all equal in the eyes of the Lord (there is no superiority for anyone)

-We as Christians belong to God's family equally. We need each other and we are a part of each other.

-Ephesians 2:17-22 "And Jesus came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to **the Father**. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens with the ^[al]saints, and are of **God's household =family**

Value #3: We will be a healthy Family (all things healthy grow: we will lead each other into spiritual growth)

-**a welcoming family** (we want you here; we need you here & you need us)

-**a diverse family** (EVERYONE is welcome at the WELL: regardless of race, money, drive, where you live, school)

-**an authentic family** (we are going to be honest about the good and the bad, even the ugly)

-**a forgiving family** (we are going to extend grace to each other; I need it!! And so do you!)

-**striving to love well and help one another flourish in the gospel.** (If you are the same person in 1 yr =failed)

Notice here in Romans 12 how Paul begins this section of his letter to the Believers in Rome:

Vs. 1: "Therefore I urge you, **brothers and sisters**, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, ^[a]acceptable to God, *which is your ^[al]spiritual service of worship.* ² And do not be conformed to this ^[a]world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may ^[a]prove what the will of God is, that which is good and ^[a]acceptable and perfect. Paul's charge is that we are to daily offer ourselves to the Lord as our spiritual act of worship; He is our Lord and Master, and we yield our wants/rights/desires to Him =to be righteous and accomplish His will in our lives & through us to accomplish His will=building His kingdom on earth

-**This can only be accomplished as we allow Jesus to transform our minds/hearts into spiritual minds**

-**Notice the first reality of a spiritually transformed mind (vs. natural/fleshly mind) = humility**

³ For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound (wise) judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

-**A second reality of a spiritually transformed mind is that we are dependent upon God & others (isolated)**

⁴ For just as we have many parts in one body and all ^[a]the body's parts do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another. =Family members depend on each other

-Since Believers in Christ are now members of Christ's Body = FAMILY – **how are we to treat our family?**

Vs. 9: Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.=we are connected to each other by Christ. =members/family

1. **As Believers in Christ, we are called to Know our Church family.** (KNOW = time + intentionality=intimacy)

-1 John 3:1-2 "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." to 'know' = sp. connection in Christ

There is something really special about a spiritual connection with another believer. (one Big family reunion)

- To really know someone you have to spend both quality & quantity of time with them. = intentional rel. bldg

- To really know someone we must become students of each other and servants of each other.

- To really know someone, you yourself have to be known = Vulnerable; invite others into your weakness

-**WHO at the WELL really knows you?** Who do you really know? Who can you count on no matter what?

- We have to forge into new relationships in biblical community; discipleship groups, Gather at the Table (ladies) men's bible studies, serving together in children's min.; church-wide fellowships, Mon. eve. prayer group,

2. **As Believers in Christ, we are called to Love our Church family.** (*agape*: unconditional love/sacrificial)

-John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." = agape love: sacrificial love

-**How do we show sacrificial love?** (Consider others' needs above yours; we serve others even when it is inconvenient; we don't look to take credit, but quickly praise others; we pursue and bless those we don't like; we don't give up on others when they fail/disappoint us; we forgive often;) = to love others takes work; we risk being hurt when we become vulnerable & expose our hearts = big Risk. But Christ commands it.

- **Our work on this earth is relational work.** = people business! Relationship bldg. is the work of the Believer.

-What we show for our ministry on earth (in heaven) = **Whose lives are changed today because of your spiritual investment?** Who will be in heaven because of your faithful witness? Who is growing into Christlikeness b/c U?

3. **As Believer in Christ, we are called to Support our Church family.** What does it mean to support them?

-Gal 6:10 "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."

-We celebrate what excites and encourages them spiritually & in their families, their jobs, their hobbies, lives

-We weep and hurt with those who are broken and wounded. We grieve with those who grieve. We are present

-In support, we give sacrificially so others may be ministered to and helped. We serve them well & consistently.

-1 Cor. 12:26 "And if one part of the body suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if a part is honored, all the parts rejoice with it."

-Heb. 10:24-25 "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 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."

As a local church family, we want to laugh with each other, enjoy each other's company, serve together, accomplish great things for God together, we want to be inspired together, and dream together about the Lord's future for us before He returns; we want to experience life with each other (hurts and highs, and unexpected blessings along the way)

- **ARE you a part of God's Family?**

Romans 8:14-17 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.

John 1:12 "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God"

APPLICATION:

-What will you begin to do that will help you get connected to other believers' lives at the WELL?

-What will you say NO to in order to make time to invest into other peoples' lives?

-Who is God calling you to engage spiritually? To invest into their lives spiritually?

Community Group Questions

1. As you review the WELL's 3rd Value on Family, in what ways are we succeeding? Failing? What part do you (your community group) play in helping achieving a successful Value of FAMILY?
2. What defines us scripturally as Believers as part of God's family?
3. What does the Bible state that we can know we are truly part of God's family? Romans 8:14-17
4. What is the significance of Romans 12:1-2 as it pertains to the right mind frame for loving one's church family?
5. Of the three commands of Christ to Know, Love, and Support one's church family, which can you improve on?