

To-Do in 2025: Church Integration

Key Scriptures:

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Romans 12:5 so we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually we are members who belong to one another.

1 Peter 5:2-3 I exhort the elders among you . . . ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Acts 20:28 (speaking to the elders in Ephesus) "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Ephesians 5:22-32 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

Key Point: The church is much more than a place. We are responsible for integrating into our local churches as best possible.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- What were your first/early experiences of attending church? Were those positive or negative experiences in your faith journey? Why?

Reflect, Think, & Share: Read through the key scriptures and share any observations or questions with the group.

- Church is not simply a destination or a place to go, it's something more than that. As a group how would you define the church?
- Jonathan Lehman wrote, "*The local church is the authority on earth that Jesus has instituted to officially affirm and give shape to my Christian life and yours.*" What do you think this means?
- How important is the church? According to Acts 20:28, what did God do for the church?
- God describes the church to us with many different metaphors: A body, a household/family, a flock of sheep, branches of a vine, a temple, a people, a holy nation, salt of the earth, exiles, a building, In what way do each of these contribute to understanding something about our union with the church?
- In Romans 12:5, what are the implications of belonging to each other?
- What are the responsibilities of both the congregation and the leadership within the church? (Acts 20:18, 1 Peter 5:2-3, Hebrews 13:17)
- In Ephesians 5:22-32, circle every time Paul is speaking about the church. Do you think his emphasis is more about marriage, or the church? What do we learn about the church here?

Start doing: If you are not a member of Grace Point, consider attending the Discover class to find out more. Protect the unity of our church by acting in love toward other members, by refusing to gossip, and by following the leaders. Share the responsibility by praying for its growth, and by inviting others to attend. Serve the ministry of our church by discovering your gifts and talents, by being equipped to serve and by developing a servant's heart. Support the testimony of our church by attending faithfully, by living a godly life, and by giving regularly.

Prayer Requests. Take some time to pray together. Use the key scriptures as a guide in praying the scriptures back to God.

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