

WHAT YOUR CHURCH EXPECTS FROM YOU

Part 2 of GREAT EXPECTATIONS. Hebrews 10:19-25.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. September 17, 2023.

RECAP

The greatest blessing is access to our Holy God.

- Through the High Priestly ministry of Jesus Christ.

Such amazing grace has implications. Last week:

- We can expect our church to help us enter the Holy of Holies.
- We can expect our church to deepen our faith in Jesus.

This week, let's talk about what our church expects from us

- Remember this: We are the church. All of us.
- So ... What can all of us expect from all of us?

HEBREWS 10:19-25

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 **let us** draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 **Let us** hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

24 And **let us** consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 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.

FIGURING OUT HOW VERSES 24-25 FIT

QUESTION: I can see how verses 22 and 23 are related to verses 19-21.

- But how do stirring one another up to love and good works, and meeting together, relate to the rest of the passage?

ANSWER: They are related like this:

- Our faith is frail, so we wander away from Jesus.
- The church as a community can hold us up when our faith falters.
- But only if we keep on loving and doing works to support each other.

CONCLUSION: A supportive community can keep us strong in faith.

- So ... we put a lot of focus and energy into being that community.
- So ... Your church expects you to join a small group.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE JOIN A GROUP?

1. In a small group, we're connected.

- God made humans for relationships.

Genesis 2:18 (ESV) Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

- God made Christians for community, cf. our passage, Jesus, early church:

Acts 2:42 (ESV) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

- Fellowship is Christ-centered community and connections. That's the idea behind small groups.

2. In a small group, we're protected.

- It's hard to stay spiritually healthy.
- But when we feel alone, things get really rough.
- To destroy faith, take away Christ-centered community

Ecclesiastes 4:10b (ESV) Woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

- Loner Christians are at risk of falling down with no one to pick them up.
- The ideal life of faith is spent in relationships: acceptance, love, etc.

Ecclesiastes 4:10b (ESV) Woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!

- Every Jesus-follower needs a support system.

JOIN A SMALL GROUP THIS FALL

Small groups are vital for resilient faith

- A pastor of a church with 7,000 small groups once said:

“Small groups are not a ministry of the church; small groups are not a program of the church; small groups are not an outreach of the church; small groups are not an event of the church; small groups are the church.”

- That's hyperbole, but it is true that small groups are essential.
- It's easier to live as a believer when you're a believer.

Find a small group at tinyurl.com/cstone-groups or at the Welcome Center.

MORE REASONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

growcurriculum.org/the-importance-of-small-groups-in-your-church/

Small groups are an important way for people to connect and learn within the church and there are many benefits:

Relationship Development: With fewer people in a small group, they have the opportunity to develop more meaningful connections and friendships with other Christians and build a trusted community of fellow believers.

Care & Concern: A small group can learn about the concerns of the adults within the group. As they learn of the concerns and needs of each other, they can relate better and show their care through words, prayers, and actions.

Faith Out Loud: Participating in a small group can help people learn to live out their faith. This is a chance for adults to put into practice what they have learned in their lifetime and deepen their faith and belief.

Prayer Practice: Prayer in a small group is more focused. The intimate setting with fewer adults can make it easier for each one to pray out loud, helping them increase confidence and further develop their prayer habits.

Comfort & Safety: Small groups are less intimidating. This provides a safe space and helps shy people feel more comfortable about speaking up and sharing or praying. Participating in a church small group helps people build confidence.

Edification & Encouragement: In a small group study setting, adults will understand how they can better serve each other by providing edification and accountability for their Christian brothers and sisters. It provides an additional opportunity to share encouragement for others.

Leadership Development: People may be natural leaders or need to brush up their leadership skills a bit. In a small group setting, it allows the opportunity to help people practice leadership as they further develop and grow their skills.