

Week 5: Day 14-16

**Week 6: Day 17-19**

Week 7: Day 20-22

Week 8: Day 23-25

## **Introduction**

### **I. The Purpose Driven Life**

#### **a. This Teaching**

- Based on a bestselling book written by Rick Warren, lead pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, CA.
- The book is written as a 40 day series of daily devotionals.
- The number 40 was selected because of it's biblical significance
  1. Noah's life was transformed by 40 days of rain.
  2. Moses was transformed by 40 days on Mount Sinai and 40 years in the desert.
  3. The spies were transformed by 40 days in the Promised Land
  4. David was transformed by Goliath's 40 day challenge.
  5. Elijah was transformed when God gave him 40 days of strength from a single meal.
  6. The entire city of Nineveh was transformed when God gave the people 40 days to change.
  7. Jesus was empowered by 40 days in the wilderness.
  8. The disciples were transformed by 40 days with Jesus after his resurrection.

#### **b. The Goals for this teaching**

1. Promote personal devotion and understanding of our individual purposes for life.
2. Strengthen the desire of individuals to serve the fellowship of believers through each partner discovering his/her divine calling.
3. Create opportunities for small group leaders to share this information in a small group setting with their un-churched friends and family.

## II. A Place to Belong (Day 17)

### a. Introduction

1. None of us can fulfill God's purposes by ourselves.
2. Our relationship to Christ is personal but God doesn't intend it to be private.
3. Paul vindicates that we are one body having many members.
  - i. **Romans 12:5** [So we](#), being [many, are one body in Christ, and every one members](#) one of [another](#).
2. Inconsistent attendance at worship services and other gatherings is the first symptom of spiritual decline.
3. The church is still God's vehicle to bring salvation to this world in our current dispensation of Grace.
4. "The person who says, "I don't need the church," is either arrogant or ignorant. The church is so significant that Jesus died on the cross for it."
5. "Sadly many, Christians [people] use the church but don't love it."

### b. Your Local Fellowship

- The term church refers to a local visible assembly.

*"The Bible says a Christian without a church home is like an organ without a body, a sheep without a flock, or a child without a family. It is an unnatural state. The Bible says, 'You belong in God's household with every other Christian.' Today's culture of independent individualism has created many spiritual orphans—'bunny believers' who hop around from one church to another without any identity, accountability, or commitment. Many believe one can be a 'good Christian' without joining (or even attending) a local church, but God would strongly disagree. The Bible offers many compelling reasons for being committed and active in a local fellowship."*
- The term church comes from the word ekklesia – which means assembly.
  1. During the Roman census and voting periods, the town's voting aged men would assemble to carry out business.

### c. Why You Need a Church Family

- a. A church family identifies you as a genuine believer.
  1. Jesus said – "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another." [John 13:35]
- b. A church family moves you out of self-centered isolation.
  2. Many people know John 3:16 but are unaware of 1 John 3:16: "**3:16** [Hereby perceive we](#) the [love](#) of God, [because he](#) laid [down his life for us: and we ought](#) to lay [down](#) our [lives for](#) the [brethren](#)."

- c. A church family helps you develop spiritual muscle.
  - 3. Over fifty times in the New Testament the phrase “one another or each other” is used:
  - 4. Pray, encourage, admonish, greet, serve, teach, accept, honor, bear, forgive, submit, and be devoted to each other.
- d. The Body of Christ needs you. – exercise your spiritual gift
- e. You will share in Christ’s mission in the world.
- f. A church family will keep you from backsliding.
  - 5. We are responsible for each other.

5:19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

d. It’s All in the Church

▪ PURPOSE

- 1. A purpose to live for
- 2. A people to live with
- 3. Principles to live by
- 4. A profession to live out
- 5. A power to live on

▪ Our purposes

- 1. Worship helps you focus on God
- 2. Fellowship helps you face life’s problems
- 3. Discipleship helps fortify your faith
- 4. Ministry helps find your talents
- 5. Evangelism helps fulfill your mission

*Question to consider: Does my level of involvement in my local church demonstrate that I love and am committed to God’s family?*

e. Your Choice

- Commitment – The difference between being a church attender and a church member is commitment. Attenders are spectators from the sidelines; members get involved in the ministry. Attenders are consumers; members are contributors.

### III. Experiencing Life Together (Day 18)

- ❖ Fellowship is so much more than sharing refreshments or attending church. Fellowship is partnering together in life.
  - ❖ Small groups of less than ten people are critical to ensure everyone is participating in ministry and connected to the fellowship.
- a. In real fellowship people experience authenticity.
    - Authentic fellowship is not superficial, surface-level chit-chat. It is genuine, heart-to-heart, sometimes gut-level, sharing.
  - b. In real fellowship people experience mutuality.
    - Mutuality is the art of depending upon each other.
    - God expects you to do whatever you can to help others.
  - c. In real fellowship people experience sympathy.
    - Sympathy meets two fundamental needs: (1) the need to be understood and (2) the need to have your feelings validated.
    - The deepest, most intense level is the fellowship of suffering, where we enter into each other's pains and burdens.

**Philippians 3:10** That I may [know him, and](#) the [power](#) of [his resurrection, and](#) the [fellowship](#) of [his sufferings](#), being made [conformable](#) unto [his death](#);

**Galatians 6:2** Bear [ye](#) one [another's burdens, and so fulfil](#) the [law](#) of [Christ](#).

- d. In real fellowship people experience mercy.
  - Fellowship is a place of grace, where mistakes aren't rubbed in but rubbed out. Fellowship happens when mercy wins over justice.
  - Forgiveness and love are essential especially after God forgave us for Christ's sake.

**Ephesians 4:32** [And be](#) ye [kind](#) one to [another \\*](#), [tenderhearted, forgiving](#) one [another](#), even [as \\* \\* God for Christ's sake](#) hath [forgiven you](#).

### IV. Cultivating Community (Day 19)

- ❖ **"Community requires commitment"**
- a. Cultivating community takes honesty
  1. Paul admonishes that those who are spiritual should help those that have erred.
  2. Frankness is not a license to say anything you want, wherever and whenever you want. It is not rudeness.

*“ Many church fellowships and small groups remain superficial because they are afraid of conflict. Whenever an issue pops up that might cause tension or discomfort, it is immediately glossed over in order to preserve a false sense of peace. Mr. ‘Don’t Rock the Boat’ jumps in and tries to smooth everyone’s ruffled feathers, the issue is never resolved, and everyone lives with an underlying frustration. Everyone knows about the problem, but no one talks about it openly. This creates a sick environment of secrets where gossip thrives. Paul’s solution was straightforward: “No more lies...”*

**6:1** Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

**6:2** Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

- b.** Cultivating community takes humility
  - Self importance, smugness, and stubborn pride destroy fellowship faster than anything else.
- c.** Cultivating community takes courtesy
  - Courtesy is respecting our differences, being considerate of each other’s feelings, and being patient with people who irritate us.
- d.** Cultivating community takes confidentiality.
  - Confidentiality means that what is shared in your group needs to stay in your group, and the group needs to deal with it, not gossip to others about it.
- e.** Cultivating community takes frequency.
  - You must have frequent, regular contact with your group in order to build genuine fellowship.
  - **Acts 2:46** And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

Blest be the tie that binds  
 Our hearts in Christian love;  
 The fellowship of kindred minds  
 Is like to that above.

When we asunder part,  
 It gives us inward pain;  
 But we shall still be joined in heart,  
 And hope to meet again.

Before our Father’s throne  
 We pour our ardent prayers;  
 Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one  
 Our comforts and our cares.

This glorious hope revives  
 Our courage by the way;  
 While each in expectation lives,  
 And longs to see the day.

We share each other’s woes,  
 Our mutual burdens bear;  
 And often for each other flows  
 The sympathizing tear.

From sorrow, toil and pain,  
 And sin, we shall be free,  
 And perfect love and friendship reign  
 Through all eternity.