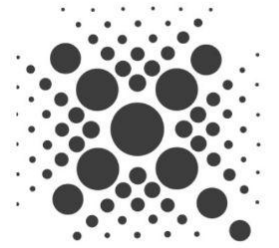


May 2022 LifeGroup  
Participant Guide



# Family Matters:

## A Healthy Church Family

The Holy Spirit  
Church Discipline  
Stewardship  
Elders Lead

# Introduction

Our desire as a staff is that you have enjoyed our recent preaching and teaching focus on ReCONNECT. Our prayer is that we will all continue to live out the principles that we have been focusing on: ReCONNECT to Christ, Church, and Community. Just because this series has ended, we anticipate these principles will become a part of who we are as a church.

Through much prayer and study, Pastor Travis has decided that following our emphasis on ReConnecting, we need to make sure we are ReConnecting in a helpful and healthy way. During the month of May, Pastor Travis will preach on four elements of a healthy church family. The four topics include Spirit Empowerment, Church Discipline, the proper use of our giftedness (Invest Wisely), and leadership structure (Elder Led Ministry).

This life group guide is designed to facilitate discussion around these four elements of a healthy church family. However, you might be reading this guide and have never connected with Jesus Christ. You might be asking, why do I need to connect with Him, or what does it even mean to connect with Jesus Christ? We are glad you are asking those questions, and we would love to talk with you about any questions you may have regarding connecting with Jesus! Give us a call or send us an email!

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## **A Healthy Church Family: Prayer Prompts**

1. Ask that God would help our church family to consider one another's needs before our own.
2. Pray that you and your church family would grow more dependent on the Holy Spirit.
3. Pray that God would help us persevere in our obedience to Him and lean on each other when it's hard to obey.
4. Pray for God to show you how to faithfully give of the time, talents, and material gifts that He has given.
5. Pray for our church as we review and study our leadership structure. Specifically, pray for Pastor Travis as he studies the topic of Elders on his sabbatical.

## Interactive Learning: “The Promise Fulfilled!” Acts 2:1-13

### Week 1

#### **Main Idea of Text:**

The Book of Acts is the historical account of the beginning of the Church. Acts 2 records the fulfillment of the promise Jesus spoke about regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit. Luke records the extraordinary things the disciples were able to accomplish because they were led by the Holy Spirit. The work of God they engaged in produced evidence of the power and presence of God in their lives. They were Holy Spirit-filled and supernaturally gifted as Ambassadors of Christ. The working of God’s Spirit in the lives of these believers was amazing to some and dismissed by others. However, there was no denying the Holy Spirit had come upon the infant Church to equip them to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Connection**

Last week's sermon emphasized the fulfillment of the promise Jesus made to send the Holy Spirit to equip and empower the Church to fulfill its mission. A healthy church is a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led church. What extraordinary things are happening in your life and in our fellowship that only can be attributed to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit’s work? It is so easy to attempt to do ministry in our own power. We must not give in to this temptation, but rather learn to hear and follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our lives, as well as in our service to one another and our community.

#### **Read: Acts 2:1-13 (CSB)**

When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. <sup>3</sup> They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout people from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7</sup> They were astounded and amazed, saying, “Look, aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?” <sup>8</sup> How is it that each of us can hear them in our own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts), <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the magnificent acts of God in our own tongues.” <sup>12</sup> They were all astounded and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup> But some sneered and said, “They’re drunk on new wine.”

Take a moment to write down your initial takeaways and summarize the texts.

**Questions:**

1. In Chapter 2:1 Luke states, "When the day of Pentecost arrived." What is the significance of this statement?
2. How is the coming of the Holy Spirit described in our text? What meaning is there in the descriptions given?
3. Why were the disciples given the supernatural ability to speak in languages they did not know?
4. What was the response of the crowd to the work of the Holy Spirit in the infant church?

**Apply the Text:**

5. If you saw the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, how do you think you would have responded? Why?
6. What does it mean "to be filled with the Holy Spirit?"
7. Why is it important that we recognize that every follower of Christ has the Holy Spirit in their lives? How can we know we are being led by the Holy Spirit?

8. How can we as a church family benefit by growing in our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leadership?

9. When has the Lord enabled you to do something that you did not think you were able to do?

10. How does this passage prompt me to pray?

## **Interactive Learning: “Why We Need Discipline” 1 Corinthians 5:1-13**

### Week 2

#### **Main Idea of Text:**

The book of 1 Corinthians challenges believers to examine every area of life through the lens of the Gospel. Specifically, Paul addresses divisions among believers, such as division over food, worship gatherings, and the resurrection. In chapter 5, in light of sexual immorality in the body of Christ, Paul addresses the motive behind and the need for discipline in the church.

#### **Connection:**

One of the toughest parts about parenting is when a child must be disciplined. It’s hard for the parent as well as for the child! Many a child has heard a parent say just before being disciplined “this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you.” When I was a child, that statement seemed like it could not be true. I was the one preparing to be disciplined! But when I became a parent, I discovered that saying was absolutely true. As a parent, it was a difficult responsibility to administer discipline to a child. But there was a motive behind that discipline that was purposeful and there was a need for the discipline that could not be overlooked.

Last week, the message preached was from 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 titled “(Why We Need Discipline).” Paul’s message to the Christians at the church of Corinth pointed to a specific situation that was being allowed to take place in the Corinthian body of Christ. Sexual immorality had made its way into the church and yet the church was not only turning a blind eye to the sin but was also boasting about their other areas of supposed greatness. Paul emphasized the purpose of discipline in the body of Christ and the importance of it.

#### **Read: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13**

**1** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and the kind of sexual immorality that is not even tolerated among the Gentiles—a man is sleeping with his father’s wife. **2** And you are arrogant! Shouldn’t you be filled with grief and remove from your congregation the one who did this? **3** Even though I am absent in the body, I am present in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who has been doing such a thing. **4** When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus, and I am with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, **5** hand that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

**6** Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little leaven leavens the whole batch of dough? **7** Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new unleavened batch, as indeed you are. For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. **8** Therefore, let us observe the feast, not with old leaven or with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.



6. Based on the exhortation of Paul, what should the goal of church discipline be (i.e., a church addressing sin, especially an ongoing pattern of rebellious behavior against God by believers in the church)?

7. What is the likely outcome of doing nothing? (See verse 6)

8. How does Matthew 18:15-20 explain how church discipline is to take place?

15 "If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he won't listen, take one or two others with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established. 17 If he doesn't pay attention to them, tell the church. If he doesn't pay attention even to the church, let him be like a Gentile and a tax collector to you. (Matthew 18:15-20)

9. In 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, the Passover feast is given as a teaching example to the church. Jewish people would have known the reference referred to the Passover feast as well as the Feast of the Unleavened Bread that followed Passover (see <https://www.gotquestions.org/leaven-in-the-Bible.html>) Leaven symbolically represented sin. What was Paul saying would be the danger of allowing sinful behavior to continue to be lived as a pattern of a believer in the church without addressing it?



10. A common objection to confronting sin in the church is “who am I to judge?”. But the verses 1 Corinthians 5:9-12 make clear that the judgment and actions to be taken aren't meant to be towards unbelievers, but professed believers. Why would Paul differentiate between professed believers who live in a pattern of sin and unbelievers?

11. What does this passage demonstrate about the holiness of God and the testimony of His church? What are possible steps your life group can take to encourage each other in being obedient to God's Word?

12. What does this passage prompt you to pray?

## Interactive Learning: “Investing Wisely” Matthew 25:14-30

### Week 3

#### **Main Idea of Text:**

Following Matthew 24 in which Jesus taught his disciples regarding future events (including end time future events), Matthew 25 records the teaching of Jesus through several parables related to his discussion of future events. The parable in Matthew 25:14-30 is known as “The Parable of The Talents” in which Jesus teaches regarding the kingdom principle of stewardship. Every single individual has been entrusted with resources from God that belong to God. We each have a responsibility to God for the kingdom investment of His resources that are entrusted to us.

#### **Connection:**

When you deposit money into a savings institution like a bank or a credit union, you are not making a donation to the bank for it to take ownership of your money. Rather, you are placing your money into the bank that it may care for and manage your money. You are asking the bank to protect your funds and expand them on your behalf (via interest). In that sense, you are asking the bank to act as a steward.

Last week, the message preached was from Matthew 25:14-30 titled “(Investing Wisely).” In this parable, a wealthy man gave his possessions to each of his three servants before he went away on a journey so that they might manage them for him in his absence. Upon his return, the master of the servants returned and settled accounts with each of the servants. How each of the servants had stewarded those resources reflected their faithfulness to their master and they were rewarded accordingly.

#### **Read: Matthew 25:14-30**

**14** “For it [*the kingdom of heaven*] is just like a man about to go on a journey. He called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them. **15** To one he gave five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent, depending on each one’s ability. Then he went on a journey. Immediately **16** the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. **17** In the same way the man with two earned two more. **18** But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s money.

**19** “After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. **20** The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. See, I’ve earned five more talents.’

**21** “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy.’

**22** “The man with two talents also approached. He said, ‘Master, you gave me two talents. See, I’ve earned two more talents.’

**23** “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy.’

**24** “The man who had received one talent also approached and said, ‘Master, I know you. You’re a harsh man, reaping where you haven’t sown and gathering where you haven’t scattered seed. **25** So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’

**26** “His master replied to him, ‘You evil, lazy servant! If you knew that I reap where I haven’t sown and gather where I haven’t scattered, **27** then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and I would have received my money back with interest when I returned.

**28** ““So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. **29** For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. **30** And throw this good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

### **Questions:**

1. What is this passage saying?

2. What is a “talent” in this parable?

3. There is irony in one of the applications of this passage in that the english word “talent” is defined as “a natural aptitude or skill”. Our natural talents were given to us by God. What are more of the resources given to us by God to steward?



10. Application: Many of God's people are being faithful with stewarding God's resources: time, talents, treasures, and the Gospel. Share how your life has been impacted by someone's being a faithful steward of His resources.

11. Consider your own stewardship. How are you investing into God's kingdom:
- a. Your time. How are you spending your 1440 minutes each day?
  - b. Your talents. How are you serving Jesus with your abilities and skills?
  - c. Your treasures. Are you being obedient to God with your financial resources?
  - d. The Gospel. How are you sharing Jesus through your life on mission?

12. What does this passage prompt you to pray?

## Interactive Learning: “The Heart of Eldership” 1 Peter 5:1-7

### Week 4

#### **Main Idea of the Text:**

In 1 Peter 5:1-7, the Apostle Peter is primarily challenging and encouraging the elders in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) during a time of widespread persecution. This message requires all churches who read this letter to respond to a central question; what is your motivation for following the Chief Shepherd?

#### **Connection:**

After reading 1 Peter 5:1-7, the passage might seem irrelevant as very few of you are elders (pastors) and might feel this letter is not for you. However, 1 Peter was written to the churches of Asia Minor, not the elders of Asia Minor, and its message is beneficial for your understanding of God’s design for His Church. Elders are an essential aspect of God’s design for a healthy church, and we should praise God for countless faithful elders throughout the centuries!

#### **Read: 1 Peter 5:1-7**

**1** I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: **2** Shepherd God’s flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly; **3** not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. **4** And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. **5** In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. **6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, **7** casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you.

Take a moment to write down your initial takeaways and summarize the text.

**Questions: Exploring the Text**

1. Why are the titles Peter attributes to himself in verse 1 important for his exhortation?
2. According to the passage, how should an elder shepherd God's flock?
3. This passage encourages all church members to "clothe yourselves with humility toward one another," what does that mean in the context of verses 5-7?
4. It's always important to remember that the Bible is focused on God; what does this passage tell us about God and His character?

**Questions: Applying the Text**

5. How does humility transform the ways in which we interact with one another? What are some practical ways that pride causes division?
6. How could you be more intentional about putting on humility this next week?
7. According to Peter, all believers are part of God's flock and have Jesus as their Chief Shepherd. What does it look like for Jesus to be your Chief Shepherd?

**Read: Titus 1:5-10**

5 The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town. 6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of one wife, with faithful children who are not accused of wildness or rebellion. 7 As an overseer of God's household, he must be blameless, not arrogant, not hot-tempered, not an excessive drinker, not a bully, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and to refute those who contradict it. 10 For there are many rebellious people, full of empty talk and deception, especially those from the circumcision party.

**Answer Questions 8 & 9 using 1 Peter 5:1-7 and Titus 1:5-10.**

8. What is the role of an elder in a local church?

9. Why is it important for all churches to have elders?

10. What does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

## Resources

1. Acts 2 Commentary

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kTe1q5KsHACnW1JtGAvknBD8Aauu3TE8/view?usp=sharing>

2. 1 Corinthians 5 Commentary

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vweUDNIORu7lwyuDTFirC46OEVXW3irg/view?usp=sharing>

3. Matthew 25 Commentary

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E-pHpGPEBGmVYjDirZszfH3XRKBukb-L/view?usp=sharing>

4. 1 Peter 5 Commentary

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gCBeg782\\_cOmQntaaQBH6QVqpYlHizxg/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gCBeg782_cOmQntaaQBH6QVqpYlHizxg/view?usp=sharing)