



Growing in His Likeness

Why Is Church Belonging So Vital?

Session 5 - October 8, 2023

THE BIG IDEA

You cannot be a Christian by yourself. Christianity is not a private affair of an individual believer, but a way of life calling us into spiritual fellowship with the whole body of Christ, the Church, for the sake of the world.

SUMMARY

- The Church is not a religious organization, voluntary society, or social club, but a **community of believers** who **embody** the **ongoing person and work of Jesus Christ**.
- The Christian faith is unintelligible – and therefore irrelevant – to the world around us unless it is **a reality lived out by Christians** through the life of the Church.
- This lived reality takes its form in **worship (identity), fellowship (belonging), and mission (purpose)**. *(We will talk about mission next week!)*
- The fellowship of the church has a **practical shape**. It involves **real belonging and participation** at the **local** level – within a congregation.
- We cannot **grow as Christians** or **fulfill our baptismal covenant** apart from **participation in the Church**.

SOMETHING TO READ TOGETHER

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15: 4-5)

How does Jesus’ metaphor of the vine and the branches connect to what it means to be a Christian? How does this illustrate the life of the church?

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

What is most important or impactful to you about your membership at this church?

SOMETHING TO TRY AT HOME

Pray about where God is calling you to engage. *(Description on reverse)*

