

Church Membership

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

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As we talk about church today, one of the things that I have always appreciated about Fairview Missionary Church over my last 19 years here is the fact that we have people who worship together on Sunday mornings from all different types of backgrounds. We have people that have been raised in just about every denomination. So I'm going to list some. I didn't do this in first service. I wish I would have. I'm going to have you raise your hand if you were raised in that particular denomination. Don't be ashamed. We have everybody.

Okay. So we're not going to fight either. I just want to see hands. All right. So we have people that were raised Methodist, so I'm going to raise my hand. I was raised Methodist. Okay. So we got some Methodists in here. We have people that were raised Lutheran. Do we have any Lutherans in here? Okay, we got some Lutherans. We have people that were raised Catholic. Anybody Catholic? Okay. What about Assembly of God? Anybody raised Assembly of God. Okay, we got Assembly of God people, nondenominational people that just went to a nondenominational church. We got some of those. What about United Brethren? Do we have any UB people in here?

All right, we got you got a couple of UB people. All right. What about Wesleyan? Anybody in the Wesleyan denomination? We got Wesleyan back there. Baptists. Baptists. We got some. See, I told you, we have everybody in here. Isn't this awesome? Okay, Eastern Orthodox. How about family from Eastern Orthodox? There we go. Okay, I know we got one. All right. So isn't that awesome? And we have people from all different denominations that come together. I'm not going to ask you to raise your hands, but some of you we have people that were never in church. Their family didn't go to church.

And so some of you, your first generation church goers. And so this is all kind of new for you and your family. We have people who were always in the church. Some of you grew up in a tradition where if the doors were opened, your family was there. And so you were in church all the time when because of all of those different backgrounds, we all have different traditions. Then we all have different things that we're used to or different things that we feel like are normal. Some people took communion every single Sunday.

It was a part of the service. Some people are used to incense being used in the service. And so for some of you there is a smell that will remind you of your childhood and the church that you grew up in. Some people grew up in a denomination where you either said the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed every single Sunday. So there was a verbal response as a congregation that you would say some people grew up with just hymns in your church. That's all that your church did was hymns.

Some people had to go through a spiritual teaching called catechism. I'm not pointing anybody out, the Catholics, but there are other you know, there's other denominations that had to do that as well. Right. So you had to go through catechism, some of you. Again, if you didn't grow up in the church, for some of you, you didn't even pray before meals. It just was foreign to you. This idea of praying. And I tell you, as a pastor of a church, as part of this family, I love the fact and I appreciate the fact that we all come from a different background because it gives us a better perspective and to hear stories from other people that are different from our own different journeys.

I love the fact that I can tell people as I hear their story that there is no normal. We all have a different journey, a different path that got us where we are. And here is the real truth. I love knowing and sharing with others that Jesus will make himself known to you no matter where you came from. If you are open to it, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter where you came from. You went to church. You didn't go to church. You went to one of the denominations I listed or a different one.

Jesus will make himself known to you if you allow him to do so. And if you are open to it because he longs to have a relationship with you. And so because we all came from different backgrounds and different traditions, one of the questions that I'm often asked and for whatever reason has become more so in the recent years is what does it mean to be a member of Fairview Missionary Church? What does it mean to be a member of the church and what do I have to do to become a member of the church?

And why don't you ever talk about church membership? Well, I'm going to do it now. All right. For those that have asked that question, I had somebody after the first service in between the services say that they have been attending Fairview for 35 years and never once heard a message about church membership until today. And so for some of you, maybe you're in that boat, maybe it's going to be boring for some of you. But I at least want to answer those questions. We had a break here between series, the last one I did, and moving into the next one. And so I want to give you practical answers.

What does church membership mean? What does it mean specifically here at Fairview Missionary Church? And then more importantly, what is church membership means spiritually? What is the Bible teach about church membership? Does the Bible teach about church membership? Those are questions that I just want to take some time to discuss today. So let's pray and then we'll we'll jump into this. Heavenly Father, I love the fact that we all come from different backgrounds.

We all have different ideas and thoughts about what normal is because of how we were raised and what we became used to. And yet I love the fact that we can all gather here together, Those of us that are in the room, those that are watching online, those that are listening on the radio, and we can worship you because there is one God. One savior. One Lord Jesus Christ. And so we gather together in that unity. And I pray that as we talk about what it means to be a member of the church.

Just that we would be obedient to you and what you've asked us to do. And so we pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Now, because we all come from a different background, membership means something different in almost all of those different denominations so that we're all on the same page. I just want to list some of those denominations and what membership means for that denomination and kind of how you become a member.

So I want to start with the largest one, which would be Catholics, to be a Catholic, to be a member of the church, you have to be baptized in the church, you have to be confirmed, and you have to take communion. When you take your first communion, that's when you can officially become a member of the church. You go through catechism, you do all of that. And in the Catholic Church, membership is very important because often this is how they used to do it. They're beginning to kind of go away from this model.

But the amount of money that your specific church or family of your family of believers got from the large Catholic pool was based on the members of your church. And so, of course, you wanted a big membership role so that you had more funds to be able to use and to grow your church and to grow your congregation. So that was important. Those that grew up Methodist, you know that there are different levels of membership. It's not just your inner you're out, there's different levels. And that's determined by what you're willing to do, how much you want to participate in the church, what offices you want to hold, things like that.

Those of you that were raised Lutheran, you have to agree obviously with the theological stances of the church. You have to look at scripture and come to the same conclusion that they do theologically on who God is. And that's true of all of these as well. Baptists, if you want it to be in the Baptist church, of course you need to be a born again Christian. And that's true of all of these as well. But they very much emphasize that you have to join in the fellowship by being baptized. So if you want to be a member of the Baptist church, you have to be baptized.

If you're not baptized as an adult after, you know, infant baptism doesn't count. If you have not made that public proclamation, you can't be a member of the the Baptist church, which that makes sense. They're called the Baptist Church, right? Eastern Orthodox. Of course, you had to agree to dedicate your life to Christ Jesus. You had to give your life to him as well. There is a Christian baptism that they have a belief in their theology, the importance of serving your community and serving in your church and in the Eastern Orthodox.

Just like the Catholic Church, you have to participate in communion as the final step to be a member in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Now, hopefully you noticed some similar themes to all of these churches because they're not all that

much different. You have to have a confession of faith in Jesus Christ that makes sense to be a member. If you want to call yourself a member of a church, you should believe their theology, their belief system. You have to have a desire to join that specific family. You you have to commit to that group of believers and say, yes, this is my family.

You had to be baptized. And many of these baptism is an important part of the process as well as communion. You see, becoming a member of a church. If you've never even understood or thought about that before, in essence, means being adopted into a family just like you would adopt a child. With that adoption or with that membership comes some benefits, but also some responsibility, a part that you play in that family.

And so I want to talk specifically here about Fairview Missionary Church and the missionary Church. What are the requirements, what are the benefits and what is the responsibility that you would have if you become a member of this church? Before I even go into those details, though, I want to answer the question Does the Bible talk about church membership? Well, the answer is no, not directly. It doesn't talk about church membership. And so you might say, well, then why do we do this thing called church membership if it's not in scripture?

I tell you, it's not specifically in scripture, but what we do as a church and what churches do with membership is talked about in Scripture. It's just never mentioned church membership. And people will say, well, why? Why doesn't the Bible talk about church membership? Well, if you go back to the first century and the early church, those people that were part of the church, there weren't just people that would decide to come to synagogue or come to church that morning and just go like, I'm just going to check things out today, you know, because there was the possibility of being killed if you went there.

And so those that were in the church, those that were going to the services, they were like a family because they had to be a family. You knew who was in and you knew who was out. You knew who believed and you knew who didn't. Now, the church today, especially in America, looks quite different. It is very possible, actually even hopeful from my perspective, that there would be people here today watching online, listening on the radio that are just checking us out. They're just trying to answer questions. Is this real? Is this really what I believe?

I have a lot of questions about faith and about God. And so they may be joining us today. They may join us next week. They may be with us for a year or two years. And they've still not made that commitment to follow Christ. And of course, they're welcome here. But we wouldn't say that they're part of our family because they don't believe what we believe yet. They're on their journey and so they're welcome. And so we have to make this distinction of who is with us and who is still trying to figure out if they want to be with us. Right. And that's where church membership can come in.

So let's talk about that a little bit. In the missionary church, to be a member in the missionary church at Fairview, of course, you have to put your faith in Jesus Christ. That's an obvious one for all of these denominations. It doesn't matter, which means you have to have confessed your sin. You have to have this moment of repentance, this realization that without a savior you are lost, that you can't do enough good things to earn favor before God, that it's only because of his death on the cross, that he took your place on the cross, that you believe Jesus is the Son of God, that you declare Jesus as the Lord of your life, and that you put your faith in hope, in the resurrection of Jesus.

That's what it means to have your faith in Jesus Christ. Where does this come from? It comes from Romans chapter ten, verses nine through ten, which I quote you often because this is a foundational truth of what we believe the apostle Paul says, If you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. That salvation for it is with your heart that you believe and are justified. And it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

This is step number one. You have to have faith in Jesus Christ. Step number two is a willingness to be baptized. You heard what I said there, right? A willingness to be baptized. We don't require baptism like the Baptist church does, but it is a strong recommendation. And for those of you that have been here for a little bit, you know that I've done messages on baptism. We don't teach or believe that the Bible teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation, but we believe that it's the next logical step.

Once you profess your faith in Jesus, we believe that you are the baptism of an adult or of a teen. Is the public proclamation of sharing with family and friends and other people that I believe in Jesus as my Lord and Savior. And in the missionary church we prefer immersion baptism where you totally go under the water. And I brought back up not

because you have to do that, but because of the beautiful symbolism behind it. That's why we choose to do it that way. It don't have to do it that way.

As we look in Scripture, that's the most common way that it was done. Of course, the symbolism being that you are buried with Christ and you're brought back to a new life. And so we just enjoy that symbolism. There's something there that helps us to think and and remember why we're doing what we're doing. But I have had people in the past that are deathly afraid of water and and the feeling of being put down in the water by somebody else and bringing them back up terrifies them. And so I've just sprinkled them before and I'm totally okay with that. All right.

But we do push baptism and say it's the next logical step. So at least be willing to talk about that In Acts Chapter two, verse 38, Peter said as he's preaching to the crowd there and Pentecost. Repent and be baptized. Every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. So it's just the logical next step. Be willing to talk about baptism. The third thing that's very specific here at the church, and we've had different models and different methods that we used in the past as to how you become a member now, we've made it as easy as possible.

At least I think it's as easy as possible. It's literally a 40 minute meeting in my office, and that whole meeting is me being able to hear your story, where you were raised, where you came from. You know, if you're married, how you met your children, your parents, all of that stuff. I love hearing about that. It's actually one of my favorite parts of my job because often when people come in my office, they have a problem or somebody else has a problem and you know, whatever else, this is just an opportunity for me to talk with you.

So if for whatever reason you have this view of my office, like the principal's office, just change that, all right? It's just coming in and having a conversation, just talking with me. I love hearing about you. And so you share your story. I hear about your faith. I hear about your faith journey, all of those things. I want to make sure that you understand what being a member is, the commitment that you would be making, and also understand that there's going to be some accountability that takes place there. I want to learn about your theological beliefs.

You know, what do you believe? And this is for your benefit and for my benefit. First, John, chapter four, verse 15. Says this. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, then God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love that God has for us, for God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in them. And so I want to make sure that we're on the same page.

And the final step to membership is just an approval by the elders. The elders. We have a group of elders that meet together. And so once you've had that meeting with me, you fill out an application. I give that application to them with your picture and they either approve you or deny you. And this is why I do what I do now, where I meet with you. You see, in the past we used to have classes. There were four classes that you had to go to for membership. And in the class there'd be 10 to 20 people and we would go through all four classes over the course of a month or a couple of months, and then you'd fill out the application sheet and you'd hand it in and I would go to the deacon meeting and they would say, okay, so we approve this person.

And I would say, I don't know. I don't know them. You know, like they sat in a class. And so the fact that I get to know you, the deacons just say, okay, you talked with them. They believe in Jesus. Yes. Okay. Are they good? And if I say yes, then they say yes. And so that's how that works. And after that, I give you a certificate with your name on it. That's church membership. You get a mailbox out there. I put it in there and I know you take that certificate and you bring it home and put it on the fridge. All right? I know that's what you do with it. No, you get a certificate just showing your membership.

And one of the things that we want to do is be able to recognize those people that are members without embarrassing people. But yet it's important enough that we want to recognize that that somebody is committing to this fellowship. And so I know that if I told you, Hey, when you become members, I have you come up on stage and introduce yourself, the amount of people that want to become members would go way down. Right? So we're throwing around ideas of whether we just take your picture and we kind of put it up on the screen before service and say, Hey, these are new members, but we're still trying to figure out the the best way to welcome our new members.

Now let's talk about the the benefits of being a member. That's just all the practical stuff here. We're going to get to some more spiritual things that are more exciting to me as we keep going here. Some of the the benefits of

membership is that you can serve as an elder or on the leadership team. You need to be a member to do that because this is kind of the highest authority structure we have in the church. The elders, how I define the elders of the church are those people that are the guardrails for us as a church.

They make sure that we are staying inside of scriptural guidelines and the things that we believe to be true. So if I, as your pastor, give a message and I say something that's outside of those lines, they hold me accountable. So it's as a church to make sure we're staying focused and to be on that team, you have to be a member of the church now. You don't need to be a member of the church to lead a Sunday school class or to, you know, be a part of a life group or even lead a life group or obviously to serve. You obviously don't need to be a member to come to a service on Sunday morning.

But if you are going to lead a Sunday school class, there is going to be a greater sense of accountability. All right. You can't be like, hey, I'm not a member. I want to lead a class and then begin teaching something that we don't agree with. All right. There will be accountability there. But as long as we're on the same page, you could teach a class without becoming a member. But to be an elder or serve on the highest leadership team, you have to be a member. The second benefit of membership is that you can vote. You can vote on decisions that are made in the church.

Now, in my 19 years here, the only votes that we have had have had to do with buying property or selling property or changing our bylaws to actually reflect what we do as a church. And so to have a vote in that, you have to be a member. If you're not a member, you don't get a vote. And one of the other benefits that comes with that voting is if you don't like me or you want a new pastor, you could vote me out. All right. So that's another benefit of membership. I shouldn't tell you that, but I will tell you that. All right. So if you if you want to vote whenever there is a pastoral question of whether I should be here or not be here, you have to be a member.

So some of you already are like, oh, man, we need to get in the membership. You know, we need to do that. All right. You get a vote. Number three is you get a sense of community. When you become a a member, you are making things official. You're saying, this is my church, this is my body of believers. Now, I get that we're part of the larger church, but in day to day living, you're saying, this is my body of believers. I like to look at it as the difference between dating somebody or being married to somebody.

When you're dating somebody, there's a commitment there. You like each other, you do stuff together, you have fun together. But if things start to go sour, you can call it off and just leave. But when you get married, it's another level of commitment. Or at least it used to be, right? It's a level of commitment saying we are committed to each other for the long haul and unless something changes in our life, I have to move away or whatever else I am going to be a part of this body of believers. The commitment level goes up. And then number four is just personal growth.

Because becoming a member is another level of commitment. It allows for more personal growth in your life, but it also allows for a level of accountability which will get into a little more in detail here as we close. If you are a member, you may be asked to serve in a leadership position as an elder or on the leadership team, and that might be outside of your comfort zone, which leads to growth.

I can tell you as somebody that's now been here for 19 years, there have been plenty of times over the last 19 years that we've thought of good men or women that would be awesome to serve in a position on that leadership team. And we can't ask them to serve because they're not a member. And according to our bylaws, they need to be a member. And so for some of you, that would be a benefit. Now let's talk about the responsibilities of membership, because when you become a member, it does carry with it some responsibilities.

As I've already said, it's a new level of commitment in your relationship that we are mutually agreeing to enter into that together. And one of those understandings is that we are now committed to each other in a way that you won't just leave and I won't just ignore you because we have a relationship. We're in this together. We have that mutual relationship that's that's based on love and on trust and on faith. And so with that membership and this is what I want to spend some time talking about just for a little bit here. There's a new level of accountability.

This is probably one of the biggest reasons that I am in support of membership to a church. Now, we're going to read from the apostle Paul in First Corinthians. He's writing to the church in Corinth. And I want you to pay attention to what he says here, Starting in verse nine of Chapter five, the Apostle Paul writes to the church and he says, I wrote to you in

my letter that you are not to associate with sexually immoral people. Not at all. Meaning people of this world who are immoral or the greedy and the swindlers and idolaters. For if that were the case, you'd have to leave this world.

And you and I both know that to be true, right? If we're not supposed to associate with people that are greedy and immoral and swindlers, then we couldn't be in our community because it's full of it. That's just what it is. But this is huge. But now Paul says, I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister, but is sexually immoral or greedy and idolater or slander a drunkard. A swindler do not even eat with such people.

Paul says This is pretty strong language for what business of it is mine to judge those outside the church. Now I just got to pause here because the church gets us wrong quite often. I wish that this verse could be posted everywhere for us when we become followers of Jesus, you know, for all of our families. Can I just tell you, it is not our responsibility to judge those outside of the church. Did you all hear that? Yes. We are not to judge those and hold people to a standard that they don't have.

We can't expect unbelievers to act like believers. And so it's not our job to judge those outside the church if they don't claim to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. It's not my responsibility to call out everything they're doing wrong all the time. Do you think that makes people like you or not like you? Probably not like you. But now listen to what Paul says. But are you not to judge those inside the church? For God will judge those outside the church, but expel the wicked person from among you?

That's pretty strong language. What is Paul saying here? Paul is making the argument that believers are supposed to hold each other accountable. If we are a family, if we have the same beliefs, if we have the same standards and understanding of what God has called us to, we are supposed to hold each other accountable. Now, this doesn't mean that you and I all become Sherlock Holmes and try to find faults with each other. I don't want you walking around with a little piece of paper and trying to figure out what so-and-so is doing wrong and what they're doing wrong.

But what it does mean is that if you know of a brother or sister that is acting in sin, something contrary to what God has asked us to do, that you in a loving way. Did you hear that? In a loving way. In a loving way? That in a loving way you confront that other person to bring that brother or sister back? If you notice something that's off, you go to them in love and say, Hey, let's talk about this. If your brother or sister won't repent, this is a follower of Jesus Christ.

If they won't repent and they are misrepresenting God to the world, then Paul tells us to expel the wicked man. It's pretty strong language. So what is this practically and spiritually look like? Because we can get in the weeds here a little bit and we can misinterpret this a little bit. Here is what I believe Paul is saying. As a church, this means that everyone is welcome to join us on a Sunday morning for service. Everyone's welcome to come in. You don't have to have the same beliefs we have.

You don't have to have the same ideas about God that we have. You're welcome to come. We actually hope that you would come and want to hear about God so that we could share him with you. You know that I stand at the doors and greet you when you're coming in. I do not stand out there with a clipboard that has a list of sins and begin checking them off right before you can come in. I say, okay, you got to fill this out and we begin checking sins. And I say, okay, you're good. You don't have that many. And then the next person, I'm sorry, your list is too full. You can't come in if you're willing to respect our service and not cause any disruption, you are willing and able to come in on a Sunday morning.

As someone who attends, you're also willing to contact me and share ideas with me and opinions and suggestions. You're willing to meet with me and have a conversation. But you also need to know that if you're not a member, your opinions and suggestions don't carry as much weight as the members do. Why? Because I don't know if you're going to be here a year from now, so you may share your concerns, your suggestions, and then we change everything. And then you go, okay, thanks. See you later. Right. So I want to make sure that you're committed. Doesn't mean I don't listen.

But if you are a member of Fairview Missionary Church, you and I have entered into agreement. And that agreement changes our relationship. I now have the responsibility to hold you accountable. And you have the responsibility to hold me accountable. If I say something or do something that is contrary to what God has asked us to do, I would expect you to call me out. I would appreciate if you call me out and say, Hey, there's something a little off here, Pastor, we need to work on this. That's the commitment that we are making to each other.

If I find that you're doing something that is contrary to what God has asked, it's my responsibility to love you, to steer you towards repentance. Paul actually models this in his letter to the Philippian Church. This is crazy. I am so glad that I was not alive during the early church when the New Testament was being written because your name or my name could have ended up in scripture for all of eternity. All right. So Paul is writing to the Philippian Church, and he's going to address these two women that aren't getting along. They're not representing God.

Well, as an example, to say this is what we do when we are in family together, Paul says, I plead with you Odis and I plead with Cintiq to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes. And I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the Gospel. They've done good things along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers whose names are in the Book of Life. These are people that are part of our family. Please talk with them about the fight that they're having.

Paul calls them out. Why? Because they are not representing God to their neighbors in the way that he has asked us to do. And the enemy can get a foothold. Therefore, if you are a member of the church and someone loves you enough to address something in your life that is not honoring to God, you and I don't have the right to say to them, Don't judge me. Did you hear that? Inside the church, followers of Jesus Christ, member of the church.

If one of you comes to me and find something that's wrong in my life or whatever else, I don't have the right to look at you and say, What about the plank in your eye? I should take what you say respectfully. You have the right as a member to talk with me. Just like in your married relationship, you have the right to talk with each other. We are not to judge those outside the church, but we have a responsible, a responsibility to hold each other accountable. And that's a good thing.

Now, you need to know in closing, we have people that have been at Fairview Missionary Church for over 30 years and have never become members. We still love them. We're not going to kick you out. All right. We're glad that you're here. Glad that you fellowship with us. It's okay. But it does limit our relationship a little bit. Now, I'm not saying if somebody that's been here for 30 years and I have a friendship with them and I know they're a follower of Jesus, if I find something that's wrong in their life, I'm not going to say, well, I can't point it out because they're not a member of the church. Right. But it is a little different.

You see, as a staff, you guys may or may not know this, but I don't know why you guys watch each other really closely. Did you guys know that sometimes we'll get a phone call and say, Hey, you know, I know so-and-so is doing this and I really need you to talk to them about it. That's not my job, you know? But if you're a member of the church and I do find out something that is happening again, there's that accountability. There's a line between who do I hold accountable and who do I not? And so as a staff, we try to make sense of that. And I feel like the easy line is membership.

If they've committed to be members here and they want to be part of this family that I'm part of, then we can hold each other accountable in a loving way. But if they're not a member and they just come here and they're at the church, but they go out and do something strange in the week and whatever else, I understand that they still can misrepresent our church because sometimes we'll hear people say like, Hey, so-and-so says they come to Fairview, but yet they're business. Ooh, it's shady, you know? And I go, Well, they might come to the church, but that doesn't mean that they believe everything we believe or, you know, have the same standards that we have or whatever else.

By the way, I've never had that phone call, so don't panic. Anybody that's here. Nobody's ever done that. But that's that's what it means. We also have people on the other end of the spectrum that have been here for less than a year. But membership is important to them. And so they've already met with me and they're now officially members. They want to feel connected. They want that accountability. I personally believe that everyone should be a member of whatever church that you're actively attending. If you are in agreement with their theology and with where they're at, there's nothing wrong with transferring your membership. If you need to move, you should.

I can't hold you accountable. You can't hold me accountable. If we live ten hours apart, it just doesn't work. Sometimes I look at our membership list and we have people on the list that I haven't seen in five years because they moved to Florida. And I'm thinking, well, we're not we're not really family anymore. I mean, we still love each other, but we can't communicate with each other. If you have attended here for a while and put your faith in God and are willing to meet

with me, I think you should become a member. But I want you to know there's no ulterior motives here. And the missionary church, We don't get more money based on the number of members we have.

My membership list could be 900 or 2. It doesn't change anything that we do. It's truly just from my heart saying I think it will benefit you and it will benefit the church if we just say, Hey, we're not going to date anymore, this is going to get more serious. We want to be committed and we want you to be committed to us, even if you're not a member. I still will talk with you. I'll still listen to you. Understand all of that? But joining a fellowship of believers is what God has called us to do.

And so we'll end with just this Hebrews 10:25 We read Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another and all the more as you see the day approaching. Do you see the day approaching? Do you know the day that he's talking about? I think I see the day approaching. And so we are told to not give up the habit of meeting together. We are to encourage one another, and that takes place in family. Let me close in prayer.

Heavenly Father. Our. Our faith in you. Our lives are to be a mirror that reflects your image. There to be a testimony. Our testimony is is meant to draw people closer to you. And so my prayer is that as a body of believers, as a church, this church that we would rightfully represent you to those we come in contact with throughout the week.

And if we are a member of this church, that we would submit ourselves to what that means and what that looks like with accountability. So that we can help each other take our next step towards you. That's our goal. That's our purpose. So would you receive the praise in Jesus name? Amen.