

Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

Sunday - September 27, 2026

Preached By: Matt Stewart

“Identity and Action”

Message #7

“Set In Order: God’s Design for His Church” 1 Timothy Series

1 Timothy 3:14-16

Homiletical Bridge:

CIT: Paul explained how the identity of the church shapes the way that it should live.

THESIS: Our identity as a the church ought to shape the way that we live.

PROPOSITION: I want the identity of FC to shape the way we live.

PROBING QUESTION: How should the identity of the church shape the way that we live.

It shapes us ...

1-Conduct of God’s household 14-15a

2-through the Community of the Living God 15b

3- As Custodians of the truth 15c

4-Through the Confession of Christ 16

BEFORE YOU MEET

Open your time together in prayer, asking God to help your group move beyond simply discussing these ideas to actually living them out. Have someone read 1 Timothy 3:14-16 aloud before diving into discussion.

Key Takeaways

1. Action flows from identity. The way the church behaves is not arbitrary. It is rooted in who the church is. Because we are who we are, we do what we do.
2. The church is the Household of God. We are not attending an organization. We have been adopted into a family. God, as the head of that household, sets the expectations for how we conduct ourselves.
3. The church is the Community of the Living God. We are not a gathering of like-minded people around a common interest. We are a people who belong to and represent a Living God in our local community and beyond.
4. The church is the Custodian of Truth. As a pillar and buttress of truth, the church is called to uphold, proclaim, and defend the Word of God. Sound doctrine is not optional -- it is central to who we are.
5. Christ is the center of it all. The confession of Christ in verse 16 anchors everything. The gospel must be central to the church's identity, and therefore central to each individual member's life.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

- Think about a team, organization, or family you have belonged to that had a strong sense of identity. How did belonging to that group shape your behavior or sense of responsibility?

Section 1 -- The Household of God (1 Timothy 3:14-15a)

- The sermon pointed out that Paul uses the word "ought," which implies a clear expectation rather than a soft suggestion. Why do you think the church today sometimes struggles to embrace clear expectations for behavior and conduct?

- What does it practically mean to you that the church belongs to God and not to us? How should that change the way we approach decisions, preferences, and conflict within the church?
- In your own home, there are likely unspoken rules and expectations that reflect the values of your family. What are some unspoken expectations that should naturally flow from being part of God's household?

Section 2 -- The Community of the Living God (1 Timothy 3:15b)

- The sermon contrasted the church with the Temple of Artemis -- a place that drove people toward self-satisfaction at the expense of others. Where do you see that same self-focused pull affecting the church today? Where do you see it in your own life?
- Acts 2:42-47 describes a community that cared deeply for one another and for those around them. On a scale of one to ten, how would you honestly rate your personal investment in the community of your local church? What would it take to move that number higher?
- The sermon listed several ways the church is actively loving its local community. Which of those opportunities resonates most with you, and what might it look like to get more personally involved?

Section 3 -- Custodians of Truth (1 Timothy 3:15c)

- A custodian, in its truest sense, is one who guards and protects. What are some of the greatest threats to sound doctrine that the church faces in our current cultural moment?
- The sermon referenced 2 Timothy 4:3-4, which warns about people seeking teachers who tell them what they want to hear rather than what is true. Have you ever been tempted to prefer comfort over truth in what you listen to or read? How do you guard against that?

- What is your personal responsibility as a church member when it comes to guarding and upholding truth? Is that something you have thought about before?

Section 4 -- The Confession of Christ (1 Timothy 3:16)

- The six phrases in verse 16 are believed to be an early hymn of the church. What strikes you most about those six statements describing the person and work of Jesus? Why?
- The sermon asked this pointed question: "If Christ is the center of the church, He must be the center of you." How would those closest to you answer that question about your life right now?
- The sermon closed with a list of self-examination questions for individuals. Work through these together as a group and allow time for honest reflection:
 - *Do you view the church as something to attend or a family to belong to?*
 - *Are you submitting your personal preferences to God's Word?*
 - *Are you a faithful steward of the resources God has entrusted to you?*
 - *Does your life help display the truth of what we say we believe?*
 - *Have you truly trusted in the transforming power of Christ as your Savior?*

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to commit to before your group meets again.

For Personal Reflection Spend time this week honestly evaluating whether Christ is truly at the center of your life or whether you have been gradually edging Him out. Journal what that evaluation reveals and bring one honest observation to share with the group next time.

For Your Household Have a conversation with the people in your home about what it looks like to live as part of God's household. What

expectations, habits, or rhythms in your home reflect that identity -- and what might need to change?

For Your Church Community Identify one specific way you are not yet invested in the life of your local church and take one concrete step this week to change that. Whether it is showing up on a Wednesday night, volunteering in a ministry, or simply reaching out to a newer family, do something intentional.

For Your Neighborhood and Community Identify one person in your life who does not yet know Christ. Pray for them by name every day this week and ask God to give you a natural opportunity to represent the Living God to them.

For Your Understanding of Truth Pick one of the passages referenced in the sermon -- 2 Timothy 4:2-4, Titus 1:9, or James 3:1 -- and spend time studying its context this week. Consider what it means for how you personally engage with and handle the Word of God.

Closing Prayer

Close your time by praying through the confession of Christ in 1 Timothy 3:16. Allow the truths of that passage -- His incarnation, resurrection, proclamation, and exaltation -- to shape the content of your prayer together. Ask God to make your group a people whose identity in Christ produces lives and a community that clearly reflect who He is.