

Small Group Discussions 2024 - 25th of February

Discussion title: Engage

How are you going to engage?

1. How are you going to engage this year at Oakhill?
2. What are some of the fears you have regarding engage or being part of a church?
3. How are you going to deal with these commitment fears practically?

Content

- Life cycle at Oakhill is Encounter, Equip, Empower, Engage, Export
- What is Church:
 - Fellowship
 - Body
 - Family
 - Fock

Church is a Fellowship

Acts 2:42 "They continued steadily learning the teaching of the apostles and joined in the fellowship."

". Fellowship is not just something the church is. It's something we do.

What is fellowship? The best definition is "Two fellows on the same ship." If you were in Cape Town and you were going to take a boat to Durban, you would inevitably have fellowship with some people. You're headed in the same direction, so you get to know each other and you associate because you're going in the same direction. That's what fellowship is. Fellowship is when you get to know other people because you're headed in the same direction.

Because the Bible says the church is a fellowship, a **top priority** in fellowship is **harmony and unity**. You can have **unity without having uniformity**. Have you noticed we're all different? We have different colored hair, different colored skin. We're different ages. We're different sizes. God loves that.

Church is a family

Because the church is a family, that should effect how we're organized too. Is your **family organized differently** than the **business** you work at? Sure it is. **1 Peter 3:8 "You should be like one big happy family full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds."** We fulfill that one good. We are one big happy family with the emphasis on **big** and **happy**.

So because we're a family, we **operate on the basis of relationships not rules**. Now, we don't have any rules any more. The only rule we have is **always tell the truth**. Why? Because the greater the relationship, the fewer rules you need. The stronger the relationship you just trust people.

I am not here to build my own Castle but His Kingdom. We lay our lives down, we are here for on thing and one thing only that is Jesus. We are here to build God's Kingdom not our own. (Matthew 6:33)

Church is a Body

"Just as each of us have one body with many members and these members do not all have the same functions, so in Christ we who are many form one body and each member belongs to all the others." Rom 12:4-5

each member belongs to all the others". When you join this church, all of a sudden, you **belong to everybody else**. If you don't want to belong to everybody else, don't join our church because this is what it means to be a member. **It's a commitment to other people**. We each have different gifts according to the grace given to us. Whatever you're good at, that's what you ought to do in the body of Christ

Ministry is not the Pastors job or the church staff, it includes all of us. We are all ministers and all have part to play in the Family of God

Church is a Flock

This was Jesus' favorite description of the church. He called it "My little flock". Therefore the church is **cared for and led by shepherds. Shepherds lead and feed.**

John 21. "Jesus asked Simon Peter, 'Do you really love me?' 'Yes, Lord,' said Peter. 'Then take care of My sheep.'" Circle **"take care"**. **That's the Greek word for "pastor"**. In our church we not only have the pastors on our staff but we have lay pastors because this church is too big to pay everybody to care for everybody else.

Fifty-eight times in the Bible it uses the phrase "one another". It says, "Love one another, Care for one another ... Greet one another ... Encourage one another ... Pray for one another ... Counsel one another ... Share with one another ... Help one another ..." It is the mutual ministry of the body to itself.

God never meant for one man -- a super star pastor -- to meet everybody's needs. But He meant for all of us to be ministers to minister to each other. We have all seen what happens when a church is built on a single personality. And that person dies or they have a moral failure and they fall out. What happens? The ministry collapses. I have been determined that since the beginning of this church that we would not build the church on a single personality. So from the very beginning of the church it's been my goal to give the ministry away.

The church spreads all the ministry around. In too many churches we have this one man superstar. He tries to minister to everybody. If you get sick and in the hospital then Superman Pastor comes flying in with his cape and he sprinkles pixie dust around your bed. Here a prayer, there a prayer, everywhere a prayer, prayer.... Then he flies off into the sunset. And we say, "Who was that man? And I didn't even get a chance to thank him!"

That's good for ego, but it's not good on a church.

Now the church is a flock. Therefore it's cared for and led by shepherds. There are three different terms that are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leader.

1 Peter 5:1-2 "To the elders [presbuteros] I say, be shepherds [poimen] of God's flock," So he says an elder is a shepherd is a pastor. Then he says, "...serving as overseers [episcopos]". A bishop is an elder is a pastor.

Acts 20 "Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders [presbuteros] of the church. When they arrived he said to them, `Guard yourselves and all the flock of God which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [bishop]. Be pastors [shepherds] of the church of God." They are used interchangeably.

There is no position

Discussion points or questions

What has church been to you all these years?

How are we going to protect the unity of our church family?

Discuss what the difference is between building our own Castle and Building God's Kingdom.

Everything starts with relationship, how are all my relationships doing? Do I have healthy relationships or unhealthy relationships?

Conclusion

Practical exercise

Put these scriptures somewhere this week where you will look at them daily.
(for example on the fridge)

Application

Go and read what the word says about the Church is a Fellowship, Body, Family, Flock.

Prayer and encouragement