



Message Series Guide

Re:Connect

Part 3 – Next Steps to Reconnect

Ephesians 4:16; 2 Timothy 2:2

We were never meant to be stagnant or motionless in our walk with the Lord. We were always meant to be moving forward toward maturity and faith in Christ. Two important steps that believers can take in their faith walk are membership and discipleship. Even though the New Testament doesn't explicitly use the word, *membership*, the concept of belonging to a community of faith-believers is definitely implied. In the face of individualism that says, "truth is whatever I believe it is," followers of Christ can stand united through covenant membership in their commitment to the truth of God's Word and their love for one another. Membership in a local church should include the process of discipleship. Discipleship means we are essentially maturing in our faith and becoming more and more like Jesus. As we mature in our faith, we are also called to make disciples...who make disciples.

READ:

Ephesian 4:16 • Romans 12:4-5 • Matthew 18:15-17 • Matthew 4:18-22 • 2 Timothy 2:2

- Why is the concept of being a casual church attender not biblical? How is does this phenomenon reflect our consumer culture? How is church membership counter-cultural to our low-commitment culture?
- Explain how the New Testament provides support (or lack of support) for the concept of church membership? Why do you think many churches in America have discarded church membership?
- What are the positives of joining a church through membership? What are the negatives?
- How does church membership help provide care for another? How does it help provide accountability for one another? Why is church discipline important? How is discipline best carried out in the church?
- Put into your own words what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Should every believer, no matter what his gifts, be involved in discipleship? Why/why not?

DISCUSS:

- How would you respond to someone who said, "I am already a member of the Body of Christ and I already actively participate in worship and/or other activities of the church. Why should I become a church member?"
- Why is church membership less about "privileges" and more about "responsibilities"?
- Discuss the different ways discipleship happen at The Ridge? Who has benefited from a discipleship relationship and why? How does a discipleship culture help strengthen a local church body?
- How would you describe your readiness to begin the journey of discipling? What can you do to help The Ridge move toward a culture of discipleship? What would you need to change to do this?

PRAY:

Pray about the next step(s) the Lord may be leading you to take in your faith journey.

RESPOND:

Commit to take your next step as a church member and as a disciple of Christ as you become more and more like Jesus every day.



Sermon Notes

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The following are possible next steps that the Lord may be leading you to take as you connect and reconnect to the mission of The Ridge. As committed followers of Christ these are things we want FOR you. We believe these steps will help deepen your relationship as a follower of Christ, and also will widen your impact as a servant of Christ.

I. Next Step: Church Membership

- 53% of Christians in the U.S say they are not members of any local congregation.
- Membership makes our commitment to Christ and His mission visible.
- 90 of the 114 references to the word “church” in the New Testament are references to gatherings of believers in specific locations.
- Membership allows us to commit in a low-commitment culture.
- Membership provides care and accountability.

Membership at The Ridge means you are a baptized believer in Jesus Christ, fully committed to the mission of the church (Love God • Love People • Make a Difference)

- **Connected to service using your gifts and talents (Ministry Volunteer).**
- **Connected to other believers in Christ-honoring relationships (Journey groups, bible study groups, discipleship groups).**

2. Next Step: Discipleship

- Discipleship is the process of growing and maturing in our faith.
- The process of discipleship must be simple and repeatable.