

Encounter Church  
Sunday September 6, 2026

Pursue  
“From Encounter to Expansion”

INTRODUCTION: Happy 10 Year Anniversary Encounter Family!

God doesn't want us merely to attend church; He wants us to encounter His presence, experience His transforming freedom, belong to His family, and participate in expanding His Kingdom.

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...”

**1. Encounter God**

*“Everything begins with His presence.”*

Exodus 33:14 (NKJV) And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

***Moses didn't simply want God's blessings—he wanted God Himself.***

Exodus 33:15 (NKJV) “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.”

*We don't need merely an experience; we need an encounter with God.  
God's presence changes us.*

An encounter with God changes our perspective, priorities, and purpose.

***Church should be a place where people meet Jesus, not simply attend a service.***

*“Am I seeking God's hand, or am I seeking God's face?”*

*When we truly encounter God, we cannot remain the same. His presence exposes what has been holding us captive—and Jesus came to set us free.*

**2. Experience Freedom**

“Jesus didn't save us to keep us bound.”

John 8:36 (NKJV) “ Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”

Galatians 5:1 (NKJV) “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free.”

WE CAN SEE THIS IN JOHN 4 WITH THE WOMAN AT THE WELL!

***She came to the well carrying shame, rejection, and a complicated past.***

***She encountered Jesus. And she left differently.***

John 4:28–29 (NKJV) - “The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, (29)“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”

***She left her waterpot and went into the city telling others about Jesus.***

Jesus frees us from: The power of sin. The shame of our past. The fear of our future.

Jesus frees us from the need for people's approval! The bondage of unforgiveness. The lies we've believed about ourselves.

HERE'S WHAT WE REALLY NEED TO KNOW!

***Freedom isn't simply being released FROM something; it's being released FOR something.***

***We are free to worship, to serve, to love, to belong, and to fulfill God's purpose.***

***And once God sets us free, He doesn't isolate us. He places us in a family.***

### **3. Engage the Family**

***We were never designed to do this alone.***

Acts 2:42 (NKJV)- “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

***Notice that the early believers devoted themselves to both God and one another.***

***Church isn't an audience. It's a family. You don't simply go to church.  
You belong to the Church***

WHAT DOES AN ENGAGED CHURCH FAMILY DO?

#### **1. *We worship together.***

Psalm 95:6 (NKJV)- “Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.”

2. *We grow together.*

Ephesians 4:15–16 (NKJV)-“but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

3. *We carry one another.*

Galatians 6:2 (NKJV)- “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

4. *We serve one another.*

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)- “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

5. *We encourage one another.*

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NKJV) -Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”

6. *We love one another.*

John 13:34–35 (NKJV)-A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

POWERFUL STATEMENTS

***“You can attend church and still be disconnected from the Church.”***

***God’s design is not rows of spectators but a community of disciples.***

***But God never intended the church family to become a holy huddle. What God does in us is intended to flow through us to others.***

4. **Enlarge the Kingdom**

***“Blessed to be a blessing.”***

Matthew 28:19–20 (NKJV) Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20)teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Isaiah 54:2 (NKJV)- ““Enlarge the place of your tent, And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; Do not spare; Lengthen your cords, And strengthen your stakes.”

AGAIN THE EARLY CHURCH IS A GREAT EXAMPLE!

Acts 2:47 (NKJV) “And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

*The church grew because ordinary people became witnesses of an extraordinary Jesus.*

KINGDOM ENLARGEMENT HAPPENS WHEN WE:  
GO — SERVE — GIVE — INVITE — WITNESS — MAKE DISCIPLES

***Church growth isn't ultimately about getting more people into our building.  
Kingdom enlargement is about getting more people into relationship with Jesus.***

CLOSING: Here's the big idea: Encounter leads to freedom. Freedom leads to belonging. Belonging leads to serving. Serving leads to Kingdom impact.

“We encounter God, we experience freedom, we engage the family, and we enlarge the Kingdom.”

HERE'S MY CLOSING CHALLENGE:

Where are you in the journey?

1. Encounter God

Have you truly encountered Jesus?

2. Experience Freedom

Is there something Jesus wants to set you free from?

3. Engage the Church Family

Are you attending—or are you truly connected?

4. Enlarge the Kingdom

Who are you reaching for Jesus?

God's desire isn't simply to get us to church. His desire is to get us into His presence, His presence into our lives, His life into His family, and His family into the world.

Encounter God. Experience Freedom. Engage the Family.

Enlarge the Kingdom. That's the journey of a disciple.

FAMILY, LET'S MOVE FORWARD