

5-Day Devotional: The Church We Are Called To Be

Day 1: The Foundation That Holds

Reading: Matthew 16:13-18

Devotional: Jesus declared, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Notice the weight lifted from our shoulders—Jesus builds His church, not us. We are participants in something far greater than our programs or plans. The church stands firm not because of our strength, but because of His promise. When we feel overwhelmed by the challenges facing the body of Christ, we must return to this foundational truth: Christ is the architect and builder. Our role is to surrender our plans and align with His purposes. Today, ask yourself: Am I trying to build something in my own strength, or am I trusting Jesus to build His church through me?

Day 2: Undiluted Truth in a Watered-Down World

Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Devotional: Paul warns against tampering with God's Word—watering it down like dishonest wine merchants diluted their product. In our desire to be appealing and relevant, we face constant temptation to soften the gospel's edges. But the power of the gospel lies in its purity. When we compromise truth for comfort or water down Scripture for acceptance, we rob people of transformation. The gospel doesn't need our improvements; it needs our faithfulness. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life—not a way among many options. This exclusivity isn't narrow-mindedness; it's mercy. God made the path clear so no one would be confused. Today, commit to speaking God's truth with love, refusing to dilute the message that has power to save.

Day 3: Carrying Burdens Together

Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Devotional: We are afflicted but not crushed, perplexed but not in despair. These words acknowledge both the struggle and the victory. Too often, the church celebrates the triumph while

ignoring the battle. But people are carrying more than we see—mental health struggles, hidden anxieties, secret sins, overwhelming grief. The church in 2026 must learn empathy, not just encouragement. Before offering solutions, we must learn to say, "I'm sorry. This is hard. You're not alone." The treasure of the gospel resides in clay jars—fragile, broken people like us. Our weakness doesn't disqualify us; it positions us to minister authentically. Stop pretending you have it all together. Your honesty about struggle gives others permission to be real. Who needs you to step into their pain today?

Day 4: Trust Rebuilt Through Presence

Reading: Galatians 6:1-5

Devotional: The modern church faces a trust crisis. People are curious about Jesus but cautious about His people. Why? Because we've given them empty boxes wrapped in pretty paper—promises without substance, performance without presence. Rebuilding trust requires authenticity. It demands we bear one another's burdens rather than judge them. It means showing up consistently, not just during convenient moments. Your presence matters more than your perfection. People don't need you to have all the answers; they need you to walk with them while seeking answers together. The front door of the church has changed—people scroll through your social media, observe your daily life, and watch how you treat others before they ever visit a building. Your everyday faithfulness is your most powerful witness. Who is watching your life, and what Jesus are they seeing?

Day 5: From Curious to Core

Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Devotional: The early church devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. They didn't just attend church; they were the church. This is the journey from curious observer to committed core—from watching from a distance to fully engaging in community. Discipleship isn't a program; it's a lifestyle of walking together toward Christ. The church in 2026 must focus on moving people along this path—not through manipulation or empty promises, but through genuine relationships and undiluted truth. Consider your own journey: Are you curious,

committed, or core? And more importantly, who are you helping move deeper? The pursuit of Jesus is not a solo endeavor. We need each other—to encourage, challenge, comfort, and sharpen. Today, identify one person you can intentionally disciple and one person you need to invite into your life for accountability and growth.

Reflection Question for the Week: If someone followed you around for seven days, would they want to meet Jesus based on what they observed in your life?

Reflection Questions:

How can we as a church prioritize spiritual solutions over natural or programmatic fixes when addressing the challenges facing the body of Christ today?

In what ways might we be unintentionally watering down the gospel in an attempt to make it more appealing, and what are the consequences of losing its potency?

How does the statement 'church is something you are, not somewhere you go' challenge your current understanding of what it means to be part of the body of Christ?

What does it mean to proclaim Jesus Christ rather than ourselves or our church name, and how can we practically live this out in our daily interactions?

How can we cultivate genuine empathy for those who are afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down rather than only celebrating the victories of overcoming?

In what ways has church hurt created cautiousness in your own life or in the lives of people you know, and how can we rebuild trust through authenticity rather than performance?

What would change in your daily life if you truly believed that people are watching your presence as the first impression of the church rather than a building or program?

How can we create space for honest confession and vulnerability in our church community when many people are carrying burdens that remain unseen beneath the surface?

What does it look like to move people from being curious about Jesus to becoming part of the committed core through genuine discipleship rather than attractational programs?

If someone followed you around all week and observed your life, would they be drawn to Jesus and want to be part of your church family on Sunday?