

Let us look at Step 12, Part 2, as we look into the 12 Steps with God

Step 12 – Discipleship – Having come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and beginning this journey of faith with Him in a Bible-believing church, we share the gospel with others and encourage them to grow in Christ.

In this final step we want to take a few lessons to highlight the important themes: the journey of faith, the role of church in our lives, and the nature of discipleship.

In today's lesson, we will focus on the church as an institution, an institution that is ordained by God.

First, because the church is the body and bride of Christ, they are our family for eternity. It should not be a surprise that the church often becomes closer to our hearts than blood relatives. To some who have never enjoyed a rich, sweet and joyful relationship, trusting people with your heart is very difficult, but in a solid local church, you find people who love you for you, and willingly help whatever the need.

Proverbs 17:17, “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

...You find this to be so true in church.

The second reason we encourage you to join and participate in a local church is because through actively serving you strengthen your relationship with the Lord and grow in spiritual maturity. When you serve the Lord in His strength, you are afforded the opportunity to live what you are learning in the Word of God.

**Romans 12:11-13, “Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord...
Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”**

We see Christian service as a work that prevents depression and a focus on self, heals strained relationships, accelerates the maturing process, and many other blessings. This service is central to the life of a Christian. The only better place to exercise the opportunity to serve is within your own family.

The third reason for laboring in the church is it is an environment of high moral value and character; wherein you are around people who generally have prioritized godliness, integrity, and holiness and are there to encourage you along the same journey. The old adage seems true, “You are who you hang around.”

In the primary wisdom book in the Old Testament we read,

**Proverbs 13:20, “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise,
but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”**

If you want to be a godly person, spend time around godly people. By immersing yourself in the work of the church and its culture you will change in incredibly positive ways. Godliness from your peers tends to encourage you to be godly in kind.

The fourth, and our final reason for encouraging you to be involved in the church is that you are needed. Every local church, whether large or small, has ministry needs. God has a place for you to bring all of your spiritual gifts, talents, personality, and strengths to bear. You may not even know what some of those

things are yet, but through the maturing process you learn who you are in Christ and how He is equipping you for unique service.

1 Corinthians 12:12, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.”

In the context of this passage Paul likens the church to the human body. It has many parts that function together for the benefit of the whole body. You gain tremendously from seeing eyes, hearing ears, walking feet, working hands, or a smelling nose. In the church, you may be the eyes, the little toe, or the chin whiskers, but whatever your God-enabled purpose, you are needed by the whole. Serve your church and be a blessing to the body as you do your job and you in turn will be blessed. Whether big or small, what you contribute is necessary.

Consider and Confess:

1. Are you serving in a church? You may say, “I don’t know what to do.” Look for something obvious that could be done and begin helping with that. As you work, God will show you more or different ways to be involved or tasks to do.
2. Are you fellowshiping in a church? If so, how are you building relationships with people in your church? If not, why not?
3. What kinds of godly traits do you want in your life? Do you know someone in your church that exhibits those traits? How can you develop a relationship with that person and learn from them?
4. Do you know how you are gifted or talented, to the extent that you know how you can be involved in your church? If not, there are ways of learning about some of your personality traits, strengths, or abilities as a means of contributing. We encourage you go to work doing anything and God will direct your steps to find your niche.
5. Have you ever faced a time of life when the church felt like your lifeline? They were there for you when you needed them the most. They loved you through the hardest circumstances. How important are they to you in your life because of that, if so?
6. Have you ever been there for someone when they needed love? Have you been the answer to someone else’s prayers? Have you blessed others with your kindness, generosity, or hospitality?
7. What are you doing in your church if you have one? What can you do if you are not already serving?

Looking Forward:

In our final study we want to discuss the discipleship model as taught in God’s Word. You should be learning truth, doctrine, and theology through the study of God’s Word from someone; but you should also be teaching what you know to someone else.

How do you disciple or teach someone else, especially if you do not know an awful lot yet? We will discuss these matters as well as the importance of study of God’s Word as a lifelong pursuit. You have learned a lot through the study of these 12 steps. Maybe it is time for you to teach someone else what you know because they need it – many have said that discipleship begins with “Hello”.