

Our Community Values

What does a Christian Community look like? How should a group of believers interact? Last Fall we took a look at some values that the Scriptures make important as Christians live out their lives together. The goal was to learn...and to develop a covenant based on those values. We want to hold high these values as we commit to living them out in intentional ways. We want to encourage each other to be accountable to these values in all our interactions. And we want to let the world know this is how we intend to live. Our Savior said: *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."* John 13:35 (NIV) These values are the way we intend to demonstrate that love.

Forgiveness

We have been offered unconditional love and grace by God because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is our intention to let that unconditional love and grace we have received flow through us to others in all our interactions. We will strive to forgive as we have been forgiven. We believe relationships thrive, not because the guilty are punished, but because the innocent are merciful. (John 13:1-7; Romans 5:8; 1 John 1:7; Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 18:23-35)

Compassion

Our Lord demonstrated compassion with His heart, His words, and His desire to alleviate suffering. It is our intention to demonstrate our compassion toward others by creating a climate of care. We will carry people in our hearts, in our prayers, and support them in tangible ways. We will also practice Godly touch. We believe touch, at any age, is vital to express comfort, support, and encouragement. Done with respect, care, and consideration, it is a tool of healing that we will be intentional about sharing. (Matthew 8:1-4; John 13:15; Matthew 17:17; Matthew 18:15; 2 Corinthians 1:4)

Honesty

One of the most astounding assessments of the Messiah is found in Isaiah 53:9 – *"He had done nothing wrong, and he had never lied."* Jesus was completely honest. He never avoided the truth. But His motivation for sharing it was love...and love guided His words. It is our intention to let love lead our conversations so that our words will be both truthful and loving. We will tell the truth in a way that builds up instead of tearing down. We will set aside our desire to prove ourselves right in order to prove ourselves loving. (Psalm 101:7; Proverbs 12:22; Hebrews 6:18; Ephesians 4:15; Ephesians 5:2)

Service

Our Savior is the ultimate example of unselfish service. He said of Himself: *"...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."* Matthew 20:28 It is our intention to follow in our Savior's footsteps by being intentional in offering ourselves in service to others. We have been gifted by God for service, and we accept that it is our responsibility to seek those service opportunities without waiting to be asked. We will seek to use our talents and gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ, stepping forward in order to honor our Savior. (Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 12:4-8; Matthew 20:25-28)

Encouragement

The Apostle Paul told the Christians in Thessalonica: *"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."* 1 Thessalonians 5:11. Throughout His life, Jesus had tried to lift up the hearts of all He encountered. The Apostles carried that same message to the church after Christ's ascension. And we intend to continue in that same course. We believe that discouragement steals the desire and enjoyment of serving in Christ's kingdom. We believe that encouraging and building each other up strengthens our hearts and brings positive blessings to all our lives as we witness the Lord's love to all. We desire to be intentional about words and actions that support and encourage each other. (*Hebrews 3:13; Colossians 2:2-3*)

Thanksgiving

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:17 Thanksgiving is a constant theme in the Bible... for good reasons. Thanksgiving puts us in a right relationship with God because it acknowledges God's role as provider. It also focuses us on God's presence, promise, and blessings even when circumstances seem dire. It is our intention to be thankful always, and to look for ways to express our thankfulness that build up our family of faith. (*Psalms 100:4; Psalm 118:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:6*)

Endurance

The author of the letter to the Hebrews wrote: *"Let us run the race before us and never give up."* Hebrews 12:1 (NCV) The best work of our Savior's life was at the end of our Savior's life. In His final moments Jesus did what He had done throughout His life – He focused on His Father and the joy the Father had put before Him. It is our intention to demonstrate the power of God's love in Christ by following the Savior's lead. We believe that our best witness and our best service lie before us. We believe that we can become more and more of what Jesus wants us to be, and so we will support and encourage one another to stay in our "race". We will help each other run better, all the way to our Heavenly home. (*Hebrews 12:1-3; Matthew 25:23*)