



**SEND EVANGELICAL CHURCH**  
**MEMBERSHIP COURSE**  
**SERVICE**  
**(What should I be doing as a Church member?)**

Reading: 1Peter 1v13-2v3 –

We will look at four areas: our growth, our gifts, our money and our use of Sundays.

## **1 HOW CAN I GROW AS A CHRISTIAN?**

To grow a child needs nourishment, family love and exercise. For healthy spiritual growth a believer needs spiritual food, the committed love of a church family, opportunities for Christian service.

### **A) The Christian's Nourishment**

Jesus Christ is the bread of life, he gives living water, we are to feed on him. (John 6v35, 4v13,14, 7v37-39)

i) We hunger & thirst

- for spiritual food (1Pet 1v25-2v3)

We read God's Word each day to meet with our Lord. There are many helpful guides to help us to have a Quiet Time eg Explore

We need to find a suitable time, place and opportunity.  
(Psalm 27v4,13,14, Matt 6v6)

ii) We cry & speak

- in prayer to God (Rom 8v15)

We set aside time for personal prayer each day; to praise the Lord, to confess our sin, to thank him for his blessings and to bring our petitions for ourselves and others to the Lord.

iii) We experience pain & pleasure

- pain at our sin (1Pet 2v1)

- pleasure in praising God (1Pet 2v9)

Implications:

- These show we have spiritual life and are a basis for Christian assurance.

- We seek to develop in these.

### **B) The Christian's Family**

God is our Father. The church is our family.

If we belong to the Lord, we belong to his church.

(See page 3.01 Why does Send Evangelical church have a church membership?)

To grow spiritually we need to be fully committed to a loving local church. It won't always be easy. Sometimes it'll be very difficult. The same is true of a marriage. But God's will is for us to be part of a local Church

- i) For support
  - loving one another deeply (1Pet 1v22)
- ii) For sanctification
  - growth in holiness (1Pet 1v13-16)
  - We grow in all our relationships: to the Lord, to ourselves, to other believers, to the community and to the world.
- iii) For service
  - opportunity to know and exercise our gifts (1Pet 4v10,11)

Implications:

- We express belonging to the church by becoming a member of the church.
- We join in fellowship by working together with others.
- We develop committed relationships with those in the church.

### **C) The Christian's Exercise**

To grow we need exercise. The Christian life is one of serve to God and others.

- i) Worship
  - in praise, in lifestyle (1Pet 2v9,10)
- ii) Work
  - doing our daily work for the glory of God (Col 3v23)
- iii) Warfare
  - resisting Satan, our enemy (1Pet 5v8,9)
  - We will have troubles; rejection (1Pet 4v4)
  - We will face trials; unfair boss, (1Pet 2v18) unbelieving marriage partner (1Pet 3v1,2)
  - We will experience temptations; pride, weaknesses (1Pet 4v1-3)
  - God wants to use such things as opportunities for growth
- iv) Witness
  - to declare the love of God in word to others (1Pet 2v11,12, 3v15,16)
- v) Welfare
  - to demonstrate the love of God in action for others (1Pet 2v12, 3v9)
  - In our kindness we are to bless others.

For healthy spiritual growth we need all of these: nourishment, family love and exercise. Then we will grow up in our salvation (1Pet 2v2), become more like Jesus Christ (Rom 8v29) and develop in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour (2Pet 3v18).

## 2 HOW CAN I DISCOVER MY GIFTS?

We need to grow in the Fruit of the Spirit and then we can exercise the Gifts of the Spirit wisely and for God's glory.

### A) The Fruit of the Spirit

We are to grow in the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5v22,23): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

We grow in these fruits by them becoming more evident in our lives.

### B) Christ-like Character

We are to grow in Christ-like character. The Scriptures describe this in many ways:

- i) We are 'to be conformed to the likeness of his Son'. (Rom 8v29)
- ii) Our attitude is to be 'the same as that of Christ Jesus'. (Phil 2v5,20,21)
- iii) We are to put off the old way of life and put on the new way of life. We are to clothe ourselves in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness and love. (Col 3v1-17)
- iv) We are to follow in the steps of our Saviour. (1Pet 2v21, 4v13-19)
- v) We are 'to walk as Jesus did'. (1John 2v6)

Our aim in the Christian life is to bring glory to God by becoming more Christ-like.

### C) The Gifts of the Spirit

We are to grow in Christian service.

We all have gifts from God and are to use them in his service.

Some people divide gifts into:

- natural gifts; according to our temperament and experience, eg energy, drive,
- and spiritual gifts; as in God's grace gifts to us for service, eg teaching, helping.

The New Testament shows that all we have is from God and we are to be good stewards of all he gives us.

#### i) 'Natural Gifts'

God has given each believer many abilities and opportunities. We are to serve him in many ways throughout our lives. We need to cultivate the willingness to serve God in any way he directs us.

God wants us to use all of our abilities to serve him faithfully – health, energy, youthful years, experience, mind, time, money, resources.  
(Matt 25v14-30)

## ii) 'Spiritual Gifts'

## - Gifts

Every Christian possesses spiritual gifts and is to use them for God's glory. We are to discover and use the gifts God has given us.

(1Cor 12v7,11, Rom 12v6)

## - Lists of Gifts

There are lists of gifts in Rom 12v3-8, 1Cor 12v1-31, Eph 4v11-16, and 1Pet 4v8-11. There are about 20 different gifts listed, but few are defined in the Scriptures.

The Scriptures are complete and final, so any current revelatory gifts (preaching, teaching, prophecy, knowledge) do not have the same authority as the Scriptures and are to be assessed in the light of the Scriptures. These gifts seek to apply the Bible to life.

We seek to judge and assess our gifts and their use in the light of the Scriptures.

## - Purpose

The gifts are given 'to prepare God's people for works of service'.

(Eph 4v12)

## - Discovering &amp; Confirming our Gifts

The questionnaire in the pack is from Crusade for World Revival (CWR). It helps us see some of the areas we may be gifted in. After filling in the questionnaire, discuss it with the church leadership / mature believers who know you well. (Rom 12v4,5, 1Tim 4v14)

A helpful maxim in discovering our gifts is 'what do you like doing and what do other people like you doing'. We should also consider how God has used us in the past.

The church confirms the gifts a believer has and seeks to provide opportunities for the use of those gifts, to the building up of the church.

## - Attitudes

More important than our spiritual gifts is the attitude in which we use them. Sadly we can use a gift in a wrong way, and thus God does not receive the glory for what is done. (1Cor 12v14-26, 1Pet 4v11)

Our focus should be on serving God rather than using our gifts.

(1Pet 4v10)

Our concern should be to develop in godly character rather than discover new gifts. (1Cor 12v31, 13v1-13)

Our heart should be to serve the Lord in whatever needs to be done rather than to find opportunities to use our gifts. (Phil 2v5)

We are 'to be conformed to the likeness of his Son'. (Rom 8v29)

### 3 WHAT ABOUT MY MONEY?

#### A) The Giver of Wealth

All we have comes from God and is to be used for his glory. (Hag 2v8, 1Chron 29v13,14, James 1v17)

We are to grow in thankfulness to God for all he has blessed us with. (Rom 1v21)

We are to enjoy all the Lord gives us. (1Tim 4v4,5, 6v17)

We are to trust in God rather than in our wealth. We are to be rich in faith. (Luke 12v16-21, James 2v5, 1Tim 6v17-19, Matt 6v19-21)

We will take heed of the many warnings about money. (Luke 12v15, Matt 13v22, 1Tim 6v9,10)

#### B) His Material Gifts

We need to frequently review our attitude to material things.

##### i) Getting Money

- Our abilities to create wealth come from God. (Deut 8v11-18)
- We must be wise in the focus of our lives. (Luke 12v15)
- We will want to be sure we are serving God not Mammon. (Matt 6v24)
- We are to provide for our material needs (current and future) with forethought, diligence and care. (Prov 6v6-11, 12v11, 21v20, 27v23-27, 2Thess 3v10-12)
- We pray about our daily needs and seek to meet the daily needs of others. (Prov 30v8,9, Matt 6v11, Acts 2v45, 4v32-35)

##### ii) Possessing Money

- We will consider how having wealth is affecting our attitudes to life and to the Lord. (James 1v11, 2v5, 4v13,14, 5v1-6)
- We will guard against greed. (Luke 12v15, James 5v3)
- We will learn to be content whatever the circumstances. (Phil 4v11,12)
- We will be upright and trustworthy with money. (Prov 11v1, Luke 16v11)

##### iii) Giving Money

- We are to use our wealth responsibly. We have responsibilities to our family (1Tim 5v8), to the church (1Tim 5v17, 1Cor 9v14), to our government (Rom 13v6,7) and to the poor (Prov 14v31, 19v17, Gal 2v10).
- We are to be prudent, which is a cautious practical wisdom with discretion and care in providing for the future. (Prov 24v27, 27v23-27)
- We are to be generous. (Prov 19v17, 28v27, 2Cor 8v2,3, 9v6)
- We will use our wealth for God and his purposes. (Luke 16v9)
- One of the dangers with wealth is how it affects us and can stunt our spiritual appetite. Giving changes our hearts and attitudes to our wealth. (Prov 11v28, Matt 6v32-34, 1Tim 6v17-19)

### C) Our Giving of Money

We are to give ourselves first to the Lord and then give money. (2Cor 8v5)

We are to be motivated by the grace and example of Jesus Christ.  
(2Cor 8v9, 9v15)

#### i) The practise of giving

- In 1Cor 16v1-4 we see several principles:

Giving is part of our worship of God. All are to give. We are to give regularly and thoughtfully. We give in proportion to our income.  
Also see Luke 21v1-4, 2Cor 8v3.

#### ii) Our attitude in giving

- Paul shows the believers at Corinth the attitude they should have in giving.

2Cor 8: v2 joyfully, v3 sacrificially, v7 abundantly, v8 sincerely or lovingly, v12 willingly or freely, v14 equally, v19 readily or eagerly, v21 honourably.

2Cor 9: v2 zealously or enthusiastically, v5 bountifully or generously, v7 cheerfully, v11 liberally.

#### iii) The amount we give

- Many people commend tithing: giving 10% of our income to God's work.

- In the Old Testament:

Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek. (Gen 14v17-20)

The children of Israel gave a tithe to the Levites (Num 18v25-30), a tithe for the festivals (Deut 12v10,11,17,18), a tithe every third year to the poor (Deut 14v28,29), as well as other gifts (Lev 19v9,10, Ex 23v10,11).

This means they were giving over 25% for national requirements.

They also gave freewill offerings eg the firstfruits (Num 18v12), for the temple (Ex 35v4,5,21,22).

So there were two types of giving, required and voluntary.

- In the New Testament there is required and voluntary giving.

They paid taxes. (Matt 17v24,25, Rom 13v6,7)

They gave to the Temple. (Matt 23v23, Luke 21v1-4)

The New Testament principle is that we should give in proportion to how God has blessed us. (1Cor 16v2, 2Cor 8v11,12)

#### iv) The activities we give towards

- A member of a church will make sure that the majority of their giving will be to their local church. We give to where we are receiving our spiritual support.

- Our giving and praying should be in the same areas.

- We support those in Christian ministry and those Christian charities, which are working for the long term benefit of others.

## 4 HOW CAN I BEST USE SUNDAYS?

There are 2 main dangers in deciding upon what we should do on a Sunday.

We can make a list of rules – do's and don'ts - for the use of Sunday (legalism) or we could decide we will do anything we like on a Sunday (antinomianism).

In our hearts we need to develop godly attitudes to our use of the Sundays. All the Christian's time is the Lord's. The Jewish Sabbath does not apply to a Christian otherwise we could stone people to death for not keeping it. In this life we begin the eternal Sabbath as we rest from our works and trust in Christ. Yet, Sundays are special. Sunday is the day Christ rose from the dead and it is the day his disciples gathered to worship, break bread, give financially and receive teaching. We should not cease gathering together as some are. (Hebrews 10:25)

Therefore Sundays are-

### A) Holy - to honour our God

The Lord's Day is a holy day. It was the day the disciples met to worship Jesus. They met morning and evening. (Acts 20:7, 1 Corinthians 16:2, Rev 1:10) The Lord has stamped a seven day week on creation. The first day is the day we gather as Church to remember the resurrection together.

Implications:

- i) Sunday is to be a special/different day.
- ii) It is a day of celebration not inhibitive rules.
- iii) It is a day devoted to God, given to the service of God.
- iv) We should meet with other Christians to worship God on this day which the Church sets aside for worship and teaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

We show who is number one in our lives if we put God and his people first on the first day of the week. Is sport number one? Is money number one?

### B) A time to rest (from daily work) - to refresh our bodies/minds/souls

God finished his work of creating. (Gen 2v2,3) It is wise to cease from our daily work. It is not wise to work 7 days a week. God is concerned for our whole person and he is concerned that we have a wholesome pattern of work and rest. On Sundays we should gather with God's people and it's a good day to rest totally from our daily work and have time to focus on God more fully.

Implications:

- i) There is freedom from our daily work or studies.
- ii) We need a day each week to focus on God more fully

### C) A time to Worship - to strengthen our spirits

The church met to remember Christ, to be taught, to give, to worship on the first day.

(Acts 20v7-12, 1Cor 16v2)

**Implications:**

- i) We are to show that we value spiritual things above all else.
- ii) We meet with God's people on Sundays and are regular at worship at our local church. (Hebrews 10:25)

We are to 'Keep Sunday Special' for 'The Lord's people love the Lord's Day'. Don't stop meeting together as some are doing (Hebrews 10:25) Use the opportunity of a day of worship and rest to be refreshed in your body, mind and soul.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1 What do you need to do to develop your Quiet Time?
- 2 Which aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit are you seeking to grow in this month?
- 3 Think of some areas you can serve in within the life of the church.
- 4 Gifting: 'What do you like doing and what do other people like you doing?'
- 5 Review how much you have given in the past year. Do a budget to plan your giving for the next year.
- 6 What do you need to do to Keep Sunday Special?

**BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS****On Growing** 1Peter 1v13-2v3

- 1 What is it to 'be holy'? (1v13-16)
- 2 What motivations to holiness are given? (1v17-21)
- 3 What is the source of the believer's nourishment? Think of ways you have grown by applying God's Word to your life. (1v22-2v3)

**On the Fruit and Gifts of the Spirit**

- 1 Write out a description of each Fruit of the Spirit. (Gal 5v22,23)
- 2 Compile a list of spiritual gifts. (Rom 12v3-8, 1Cor 12v1-31, Eph 4v11-16 and 1Peter 4v8-11)
- 3 What attitudes does Peter want believers to have? (1Peter 4v7-11)

**On Money** 2Cor 8v1-15 and 9v6-15

- 1 What is our example and thus our motivation for giving money?
- 2 What attitudes are important in giving?
- 3 How has your giving supplied others? How has their giving supplied you? (8v14)

**On Sundays**

1. Why did God rest? How can you rest on Sunday? (Gen 2v2,3, Ex 23v12, 31v12-17)
2. Why is Sunday a great opportunity?

**RESOURCES**

Discovering your basic gifts (A CWR questionnaire)