

TALK IT OVER

ENGAGE SERIES

PART 2 | 25 JANUARY 2026

NOTES TO LEADERS

1. Please encourage your group to be a part of our day of prayer and fasting on Tuesday, the 3rd of February. We will fast for breakfast and lunch, and then meet at 6pm to enjoy a meal, followed by our prayer and leaders' meeting at 7pm. NB: Pre-orders for meals close at 10am on Monday, the 2nd of February.
2. We're looking for people willing to lead a 6-week group for our upcoming "Reality Check" series. Consider who in your group you could encourage to step out and lead a group for 6 weeks.
3. Help people find a way to get involved in the CityHill community by serving (if they aren't already)

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sign up online



SCRIPTURES

JOHN 13:34-35

³⁴ 'A new command I give you: **love one another**.

As I have loved you, so you must **love one another**.

³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you **love one another**.'

HEBREWS 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

WHAT DOES LOVING ONE ANOTHER LOOK LIKE?

... encouraging one another ... (Hebrews 10:25)

... bearing with one another in love. (Ephesians 4:2)

... serve one another ... (Galatians 5:13)

Be devoted to one another ... (Romans 12:10)

Honour one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)

Let us stop passing judgment on one another.

(Romans 14:13)

Accept one another ... (Romans 15:17)

START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
2. What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

START THINKING

1. Read John 13:34-35. Why do you think Jesus emphasised "*love one another*" three times in this short statement? What does that say about the nature of Christian community?
2. Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What is the connection between encouragement, meeting together, and spiritual growth?
3. What's the difference between belonging in a local church and living it out? How would you describe it in your own words?

START SHARING

1. When have you felt like the "coal pulled away from the fire"? What helped you reconnect with others and with God?
2. Which "one another" command from Sunday's message (*see the list in the Scriptures section*) is the easiest for you to live out? And which one do you find most challenging?
3. Have you ever experienced someone bearing with *you* in love or encouraging you at just the right moment? What difference did it make?
4. If you made decision #4 - **To live out Christian community** wholeheartedly this year, what would change first: your time, habits, relationships, or attitude?

START PRAYING

1. Thank Jesus for creating us for community and calling us to love one another as He loves us.
2. Help us live out true Christian community, with courage to encourage, patience to bear with others, and humility to serve in love.

START DOING

1. Reach out to someone and invite them to our Reality Check series starting on the 8th of February.
2. If you aren't already serving in the Church, consider where you can get involved and sign up.

TALK IT OVER

SUMMARY OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday, in part 2 of the Engage series, Steve highlighted that while belonging in a local church is important, living it out is the next step. He began by telling a story to illustrate this...

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire.

Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited. The pastor made himself comfortable but said nothing. In silence, he contemplated the play of the flames around the burning logs.

After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent. The host watched all this in quiet fascination.

As the one lone ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow, and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and "dead as a doornail."

Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting.

Just before the pastor was ready to leave, he picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately, it began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday."

Recap from last week

Last week, we covered the following:

- One great big decision saves me from a thousand smaller ones.
- My decisions determine my destiny.
- I Have Decided #1: To follow Jesus.
- I Have Decided #2: To spend regular time in the Word and prayer.
- I Have Decided #3: To belong in a local church.

I Have Decided #4: To live out Christian community

This is closely linked to #3: I have decided to belong in a local church. Decision #4 takes decision #3 and puts shoes on it. Is that a decision we have made wholeheartedly, forward-leaning?

There's a phrase in the New Testament that shows up again and again: "one another." If you search, you'll see how often God tells us what Christian community is supposed to look like.

³⁴ *'A new command I give you: love one another.*

As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

³⁵ *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'* John 13:34,35

If Jesus commands us to do something ONCE, it is a big deal. When He repeats something THREE times over. Makes it a HUGE deal.

What does loving one another look like?

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Let us stop passing judgment on one another (Romans 14:13)

Accept one another ... (Romans 15:17)

Here's the question: Can we obey those commands by only sitting in a row at a Sunday service? Rows are amazing for worship and for the teaching of the Word. But if all we do is arrive late and leave as the service ends, we can't live out all the "one another" commands.

We were designed for connection with other believers – connection that is authentic, meaningful, and at times vulnerable – over a long period of time.

It's a choice. It's a decision. It doesn't just happen by accident. Over the years at CityHill, we've heard both kinds of feedback. Some people say, "From the minute I walked in, it was warm and loving." Others say, "I felt isolated... it was hard to connect... it felt cliquy."

What's the difference? Often, it's not the church that's different, it's the posture people arrive with. If they arrive forward-leaning, looking to encourage, befriend, and connect, generally, they'll find it. If they arrive leaning back, waiting for someone to do it for them, they often get what that posture gives off.

So what does living out Christian community look like?

Three practical ways from the New Testament:

1. By encouraging others

²⁴ *And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* Hebrews 10:24-25

To encourage literally means to fill with courage. So as followers of Jesus, we're called to be agents of courage in other people's lives.

Practical encouragement can look like:

- With our words & actions
- Messages
- Prayer
- Gathering with other believers

The early church met in large groups and in homes (Acts 2). One of the most powerful opportunities to live this out is LifeGroups, i.e. not only in rows on a Sunday, but in circles during the week. In lounges around dining room tables, in coffee shops, at work... doing life together.

2. By bearing with others

² *Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Ephesians 3:2*

Why would God put a verse like that in the Bible? Because He knew we would be reading it... and needing it. When we decide to live out Christian community, it's with other human beings who have weaknesses and growth areas, just like we do.

Community is not always simple. Sometimes it's awkward. Sometimes we rub each other up the wrong way. Sometimes there are disagreements.

And while we are reading this thinking, "Lord, help me bear with other people," other people are reading it thinking the same about us. That's why humility and gentleness and patience are not optional extras – they're Christian community essentials.

3. By serving others

¹³ *serve one another humbly in love. Galatians 5:13*

This switches the dial inside our hearts from being takers only to being givers as well. Not just expecting everyone else to make it happen around us, but getting involved too.

From the moment we step out of our car to the moment we exit again – welcome at the door, kids ministry, coffee, communion, baptisms, musicians... the muscle on the skeleton is volunteer-driven.

Most teams on a Sunday are volunteer-led. The impact is profound – often far beyond what we can measure.

So here's a question for each of us as we start the year: How can I serve others this year?