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#### Core Seminar

#### Membership Matters

**Session 6: Life Together**

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***Teaching Suggestions from Jamie:***

*This teaching guide has two pieces: an outline of the class, and a word-for-word manuscript. Feel free to use either—after you’ve familiarized yourself with the manuscript.*

*You’ll see time markers through the outline and the manuscript. Use these! Other than Statement of Faith, this is the longest of the classes. So stick to the manuscript and watch the time markers to be sure that you get through the material and have time for questions without being rushed.*

What you *need* to cover:

* Why we expect our members to be at both the morning and evening services: because the church is community and not just teaching. Sunday PM is the centerpoint for community in our church. By coming regularly on Sunday evenings, this church will begin to feel like your church *family*.
* The importance of a culture of discipling, what discpling looks like, that you don’t need to sign up or ask permission to do it.

**Outline Format**

**Introduction**

* Let the pastoral assistant welcome people, describe the membership process, get the sign-up sheet around, and pass out books.
* Introduce yourself (name, where you live, family, job, etc.)
* Ask everyone to *briefly* introduce themselves: first and last name, how long they’ve lived in DC.

***9:50*** */ 0:00*

**Background**

* This morning we’re going to take some time to think about our life together as a church. To start, please turn with me to **Acts 2:42-47**
* Context: 50 days after crucifixion; Holy Spirit has come; Peter has preached; three thousand become Christians (v. 41)

“42And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43And awecame upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.44And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

* So what characterized this first church?
  + Loved God’s word, loved each other (even sacrificed belongings for each other).
  + Praised God, shared good news with others.
  + We want to see all that here at CHBC.
* And as is so often the case, the exciting fruit that we see is supported by some important things underneath.
  1. *Gathered* together regularly.
  2. Lived life together in *intentional relationships* (met in homes, shared with each other).
  3. Enjoyed and supported *leadership* God gave them (apostles).
  4. Spent time together in *prayer*.

**Regular Gatherings**

1. Core Seminars
   * 9:30am Sunday morning.
   * Classes on a variety of topics that equip our members to live as Christians.
2. Main worship service
   * Follows basic storyline of the gospel (God’s goodness; our sin; God’s mercy in Christ; our response).
   * We sing the gospel (**see article on music in membership matters booklet**).
   * We are led in prayer (praise, confession, petition, thanks).
   * We hear God’s word read.
   * We hear God’s word preached. And we celebrate baptisms.
     + Sermons are generally expositional (preacher takes a passage of Scripture, explains what it means, and applies it to our lives).
     + Read the passage through the week.
3. Sunday evening service
   * Meets at 5pm on Sundays.
   * More of a family time: sing, pray, hear a short devotional.
   * Prayer time: a time to hear what’s going on in our lives and lift these things to the Lord.
   * Devotional: same theme as morning sermon but from opposite Testament.
   * When we normally celebrate the Lord’s supper.

We expect all members to come to both Sunday morning and Sunday evening.

1. Members’ meetings
   * Six times each year after Evening service on 3rd Sunday of every other month.
   * For members only.
   * Discuss church business (reports from ministries, updates on finances, voting members in/out).
     + Voting members in: after your interview and approval by elders, an elder will put up your picture and share a very brief summary of your testimony. Congregation votes to accept their responsibility for you.
     + Voting members out: we vote to accept your resignation. We vote to say “yes—this person isn’t leaving because of some unrepentant sin, and they intend to join with another gospel-preaching church.”
     + Church discipline (discussed in Covenant class; note article in booklet).
2. Wednesday night Bible study
   * Wednesdays at 7pm.
   * Inductive study through a small section of Scripture.

* Children
  + Kids are always welcome at all of our services.
  + In addition: special programs for them during services.
    - During core seminars: nursery through age 3; Sunday School ages 4 to Jr. High.
    - Morning service: nursery through age 5; Praise factory K-3rd grade.
    - Similar schedule on Wednesday nights and Sunday nights.

***Anyone have any questions about any of those gatherings?***

***10:02*** */ 0:12*

**Intentional Relationships**

* As we saw in Acts 2, church life extends far beyond formal gatherings. So when you ask the question “how do I get involved at CHBC,” we’ll likely answer it in a different way than some other churches would.
  + We’re not going to pull out our org design hats and manufacture relationships for everyone—like requiring every member to be in a small group or by dividing up the church into parishes, for example.
  + And we’re not going to pull out our “get involved formula” where we assign you to different church programs. Instead, we’re going to tell you to invest in relationships. How do you get involved? Invest in relationships.
  + We’re a relationship-based church—not a program-driven church.
* From what we’ve seen, the best way to cultivate long-term spiritual health is for you to invest in intentional, spiritual relationships.
  + We want to cultivate a culture where it is normal for members to take initiative to build relationships with other members with the deliberate aim of doing them spiritual good.
  + Entrepreneurial in nature: no special permission needed to love in this way.
  + Organic and messy: can’t map this out on a spreadsheet.
  + But we’ve found that over time, this results in community that is deeper, longer-lasting, and encompasses a wider cross-section of our church.
* What does this look like? (use your own examples)
  + I often tell people who are new here that they’ll probably join the church because of the excellent teaching—but they’ll stay for years or even decades not because of the teaching per se, but because of the type of community that that teaching has built. And if you never get beyond excellent teaching on Sunday morning and into the fabric of that community, you’ll be missing out on much of the good and unique work that God has done here.

So how do we do that? Three ideas.

1. Hospitality
   * Invite people into your home; get lunch with folks who work near you; potluck; MAC.
   * Attend weddings and funerals; visit the sick; help each other move; help older members.
2. Discipling
   * Help others grow in their relationship with Jesus.
   * Find someone of the same gender and get together with them regularly to study a portion of Scripture, read a Christian book, discuss the sermon—or just encourage each other.
   * Take the initiative in finding someone like this. It’s normal in our church culture to ask people to get together regularly—even though it might seem awkward to you.
   * Having trouble? Talk to your small group leader or call the church office.
3. Small group
   * Groups limited to men or women; community groups in various neighborhoods.
   * Groups for newly married couples limited to first two years of marriage.
   * Need to commit to membership before you join a small group.

***10:11*** */ 0:21*

**Biblical Leadership**

*Elders*

* In booklet: names and brief intro men serving as elders. Some work for our church; most don’t.
* You’ll note we have more than one elder.
  + The pattern we see in Scripture is for each church to have a plurality of elders[[1]](#footnote-1).
  + Rounds out Senior Pastor’s gifts; helps make better decisions; helps in knowing our church.
* What do these men do?
  1. Pray (elders meetings; privately). We find prayer necessary in seeking to lead God’s people, and it’s honoring to God as we show our dependence on Him.
  2. Oversight as under-shepherds (marriage, finances, worship, ordinances, discipline, doctrine, missions, recommendation of elders & deacons & new members, and so forth)
  3. Teach
     + One of only two distinct qualifications of an elder vs. a deacon in 1 Timothy 3.
     + Men are given this role in Scripture (1 Timothy 2:12).
     + Elders don’t do all the teaching—but they are overseeing it.
* How do we get elders?
  + Elders are always looking to see who is doing the working of eldering—so we can recognize them as elders.
  + If elders are in agreement, a candidate will be nominated and voted on by the church.
  + If vote passes by 75% majority, new elder will serve three years.
  + After three years, can be reaffirmed by the congregation. After that, must take at least one year off. (Exception for five pastors for whom eldering is part of their job.)
  + Constitution stipulates that you should inform an elder if you believe a candidate to be unqualified. (explain why) Same goes for deacons and officers.
* It’s worth noting that while we are called in Scripture to obey our elders, we also see that final responsibility for matters of discipline and doctrine rests with the congregation. In places like 1 Cor 5 or the book of Galatians, when a problem arose in the church, the apostle Paul went after the church, not the elders or the pastor. So how can we be congregational in that sense and also obey our elders?
  + Explain box chart on the study guide in the membership matters booklet.

## *10:18 / 0:28*

## *Deacons*

* Acts 6 shows how the office of Deacon was established.
  + An issue of logistics threatened to divide the church.
  + To address this issue of unity, the apostles designated deacons to oversee this administrative challenge.
* What are the responsibilities of deacons?
  + Primary: promote unity by being shock absorbers and peacemakers.
  + Secondary: though managing areas of administration (sound, children’s ministry, ushering, community outreach, and so forth).
* We have women serving as deacons. The deacon position was not set up to have oversight of teaching, and so we see indications in Scripture that the New Testament church had woman deacons4.
* A deacon is nominated by the elders and voted on by the church. Once elected, the deacon can serve three years and then must be off for one year before they can serve another term.

*Officers and Staff*

* Officers: treasurer and clerk.
* Staff: work for the church. Descriptions in the booklet.

**Prayer**

Two suggestions of how you can pray for us:

1. Pray through the directory. (Explain how this works; why pray for people you don’t know.)
2. Pray for our church generally. (Bookmark lists things we pray for regularly on Sunday night.)

**Manuscript Format**

**Introduction**

* Let the pastoral assistant welcome people, describe the membership process, get the sign-up sheet around, and pass out books.
* Introduce yourself (name, where you live, family, job, etc.)
* Ask everyone to *briefly* introduce themselves: first and last name, how long they’ve lived in DC.

***9:50*** */ 0:00*

**Background**

This morning we’re going to take some time to think about our life together as a church. To start, please turn with me to **Acts 2:42-47**. It’s Pentecost in Jerusalem, 50 days after Jesus has died and risen again. The Holy Spirit has fallen on the disciples; Peter has preached the gospel; and, verse 41: “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

Now, let’s look at **2:42-47** and see what this first church was like:

“42And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43And awecame upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.44And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

So what characterized this first church? They loved God’s word, they loved each other—to the point of sacrificing their belongings for each other. They praised God, and they shared the good news of Jesus with others. Those are all things that we want to see here at CHBC. And as is so often the case, this exciting fruit is supported by some important things underneath. Specifically, four things in this passage that support this love for God’s word, for each other, and for the lost: First, these Christians gathered together regularly—meeting together in the temple courts. Second, they lived life together—meeting together in their homes and sharing with each other. Third, they enjoyed and supported the leadership God gave them—in this case, the apostles. And fourth, they spent time together in prayer.

As we continue through the New Testament, we see those four continue on in local churches—in increasing levels of detail. And they’re present in our own church as well. So to give you a picture of what life looks like at CHBC, I’ll walk through each of these four elements, as you can see on your study guide—to explain what they look like here.

**Regular Gatherings**

One of the most important things that we do as a church is to meet together, and there are several regular gatherings that we have as a church.

Our week begins each Sunday with a day set aside to gather with the church and worship God together. That starts at 9:30am, with Core Seminars: classes on a variety of topics that equip our members to live as Christians. I’d encourage you to take advantage of these seminars. They’re a great opportunity to grow in understanding how the Bible calls us to live.

Next is our main worship service. And it follows the basic storyline of the gospel. God’s goodness, our sinfulness, God’s mercy in Christ, and our response. We sing the gospel—using music from both modern and forgotten days **(you’ll see an explanation of how we think about music in your membership matters booklet).** We are led in several prayers (praise, confession, petition, thanks), we hear God’s Word read and we hear God’s Word preached. Sunday morning is also the time when our church celebrates baptisms.

You’ll notice that our sermons are generally expositional—which means that the preacher takes a passage of Scripture, explains what it means and applies it to our lives. The best way for you to get the most out of the sermon is to study the passage that will be preached on before you come on Sunday morning. You can see next week’s passage on the back of the bulletin each week, on our web site, or in the sermon cards that you’ll find around the church.

Third, the Sunday Evening Service, which meets at 5pm each Sunday night. If you’ve been, you’ve noticed it has a different feel than the morning service. More of a family time where we sing a few songs, we share prayer requests, we pray, and then we hear a short devotional. This is a time each week when we hear about who’s hurting, who’s rejoicing, how missionaries we support are doing, and countless other things that we cast before our Lord. Prayer time is followed by a 15 minute devotional based on a text with the same theme as the morning sermon, but from the opposite Testament. Sunday Nights are also when we normally celebrate the Lord’s Supper together.

We expect all members to come to both the Sunday morning and evening services. So plan to be there whenever you’re in town—and if you’re going to be gone for an extended period, please let one of the elders know.

Fourth: Member’s Meetings, which happen six times each year, after the Evening Service on the 3rd Sunday of every other month. Unlike the other meetings I’m describing, these are for members only. During this time we discuss all kinds of church business including reports from different ministries, updates on finances, voting members in and voting members out.

Since that last bit may be unfamiliar, let me explain: One of the most important parts of our meetings is when we vote to accept new members. So, after your membership interview and after the elders have approved your application for membership, one of the elders will put a picture of you up for the congregation to see at a members’ meeting, share an extraordinarily short summary of your testimony and then recommend you to the congregation. Then as we vote, we are saying “yes,” we will covenant with you and pray for you and help you grow in Christ.

We do the same thing when we vote to accept a member’s resignation. We vote to say “yes—this person isn’t leaving because of some unrepentant sin, and they intend to join with another gospel-preaching church.”

Member’s meetings are also when the church practices public church discipline. That’s something we talked about in greater detail in the Church Covenant class; you’ll see a one-page write-up on church discipline in your membership matters booklet.

Fifth meeting: our Wednesday Night Bible Study, which meets Wednesdays at 7pm. One of our pastors will lead an inductive study through a small section of Scripture. It’s a great chance to learn to study the Bible better and apply it more faithfully to our lives.

So those are the times that our church gathers together. And I want to make clear how important it is for you to be active in these gatherings. If you join our church, we expect you to be here Sunday morning and Sunday night and for members’ meetings—and I would encourage you to come to Core Seminars and the Wednesday night study as you’re able.

A frequent question is “what about the kids?” Well, children are always welcome at all of our services, and we also have special programs for them during the services. During Core Seminars there is nursery through age 3 and Sunday School for ages 4 through Junior High. During the morning service, we offer nursery through age 5. For kids in Kindergarten through Third Grade, we offer something we call Praise Factory, which starts just before the sermon begins. And there’s a similar schedule of children’s activities on Sunday night and Wednesday night. I should mention that we also have a youth group here at CHBC. They meet most Friday nights here at the church from 7-9:15pm. We also offer a high school core seminar class that is designed to teach biblical lessons to teenagers at a level and on a topic that pertains to the life and experiences of teens. If you are interested, please contact Charles Hedman whose name can be found on the website. Charles Hedman.

***Anyone have any questions about any of those gatherings?***

***10:02*** */ 0:12*

**Intentional Relationships**

As we saw in Acts 2, church life extends far beyond formal gatherings. So when you ask the question “how do I get involved at CHBC,” we’ll likely answer differently than some other churches would. We’re not going to pull out our org design hats and manufacture relationships for everyone—like requiring every member to be in a small group or by dividing up the church into parishes, for example. And we’re not going to pull out our “get involved formula” where we assign you to different church programs. Instead, we’re going to tell you to invest in relationships. How do you get involved? Invest in relationships. We’re a relationship-based church—not a program-driven church.

We do this because we believe that if we just herded you into programs, it might keep you busy, it might get you involved . . . but that doesn’t mean you’re growing in Christ. From what we’ve seen, the best way to cultivate long-term spiritual health for you and our church is for you to invest in intentional, spiritual relationships. That is the basic DNA of our church. We want to encourage a culture where it is normal for members, out of love for Christ and for one another, to take initiative to build relationships with other members with the deliberate aim of doing them spiritual good. It’s entrepreneurial in nature: we don’t want you to have to sign up or get special permission before you can love in this way. It’s organic and it’s messy: it’s not the type of thing you can map out on a spreadsheet. But we’ve found that over time it results in community that is deeper, encompasses a wider cross-section of our church, and is longer-lasting.

Our vision as leaders is to preach the Word faithfully, teach our people to study and live the Bible deeply, and then act as a catalyst for the kingdom-minded relationships that develop. What does that look like? It’s a Sunday prayer evening service that enables you to know and love the entire church, not just your small group or your close friends. It’s college students having families over to their dorm rooms for dinner, taking hospitality seriously. It’s the elders rarely getting into a difficult member care situation without finding that other church members have already been there first, faithfully doing good work. It’s the level of conversations you’ll have with people here. Not: “great sermon. Are you watching the game this afternoon?” But “I’ve been thinking about your situation and found that passage on hope to be incredibly encouraging.” It’s people who are willing to ask you that one last question that, while at first feeling intrusive, actually pushed you to flee a dangerous dynamic in your dating relationship.

Personally, I can say that I’ve not been in a church before where I’ve seen God create such a unique community. Where people know me deeply, where they ask me hard questions, encourage me sincerely, and really push me (hard) to spend my life for Jesus Christ. I often tell people who are new here that they’ll probably join the church because of the excellent teaching—but they’ll stay for years or even decades not because of the teaching per se, but because of the type of community that *that* teaching has built. And if you never get beyond excellent teaching on Sunday morning and into the fabric of that community, you’ll be missing out on much of the good and unique work that God has done here.

So . . . how do we do that? Three ideas:

First, practice hospitality. Make getting together with other church members a regular part of your life. Invite people into your home. Get breakfast or lunch with folks who work near you. There’s a potluck meal every second Sunday of the month September through May. There’s something called “Meals After Church (MAC)” after most Sunday night services.

And beyond eating . . . attend weddings and funerals of church members. Visit the sick and pray with them. Help each other move in and out of homes. Find older members who need help and grab another member to go and serve them. Make yourself available to give people rides if they need them. The point is . . . be involved in each other’s lives. If you have a tough time figuring out how to do that, please talk with one of the elders.

Second, be active in discipling, which is where we help others grow in their relationship with Jesus. As elders, we would strongly encourage you to find someone in our church of the same gender who you can get together with on a regular basis to study a portion of scripture, read through a Christian book, discuss the sermon—or just encourage each other to walk closer to Christ. We encourage you to take the initiative in these relationships with people you meet: no special permission required. It may seem awkward to suggest this to someone, but trust me: it is very normal in this church. If you’re having trouble finding someone to meet up with, talk with your small group leader when you get in a small group, or call the church office. If you decide you want to join the church, you’ll be given a paper on discipling during your membership interview.

Third, consider joining a small group. We have groups limited to men, groups limited to women, and mixed Community Groups that meet in various neighborhoods. We also offer some groups for newly married couples because we understand how important it is for those couples to get a good foundation in their early years. One thing that is good to know is that small groups are limited to members only because we want people to commit to the entire church (which they’re commanded to in Scripture) before they commit to a small group.

**You’ll see an article in your membership matters booklet summarizing how we answer the question “how do I get involved?”**

***10:11*** */ 0:21*

**Biblical Leadership**

## *Elders*

We begin with the biblical office of Elder. If you look at your booklet, you’ll see the names and brief intro to the men currently serving as elders. Some work for our church, but most don’t. And you’ll note that we have more than one elder; that’s because the pattern we see in Scripture is for each church to have a plurality of elders[[2]](#footnote-2). It helps round out the particular gifts that God has given to our Senior Pastor. It helps us make better decisions. And multiple elders helps in knowing a church of our size.

Now, *what do these men do*? They pray, they exercise oversight, and they teach.

First, elders are to be men of prayer. In our elder meetings, we spend extended time in prayer. We praise God, pray for each other, and pray through the membership directory. And elders invest time in prayer as a regular part of their lives. We find prayer necessary in seeking to lead God’s people, and it’s honoring to God as we show our dependence on Him.

Second, elders are to extend oversight of the church, to shepherd the flock by being under-shepherds. So elders give attention to areas of marriage, finances, worship, ordinances, discipline, doctrine, missions, recommendation of elders & deacons & new members, and so forth.

Third, elders are responsible for the teaching in the church. One of the two distinct qualifications of an elder in I Timothy 3:2 vs. a deacon is that an elder must be able to teach[[3]](#footnote-3). Men are given this role by God, as per I Timothy 2:12. This doesn’t mean that the elders are doing all of the teaching in the church, but they *are* overseeing it.

*So how do we get elders?*

As elders we are always looking to see who meets the biblical qualifications for elder and is already doing the work of eldering in our church by caring for and teaching other members—so that our congregation can formally *recognize* them as elders. Over the course of time, if the elders are in agreement, a prospective elder is nominated and will be voted on by the church. If the vote passes by at least a 75% majority, then the new elder will serve for three years. After three years, he will need to be reaffirmed by the church in order to serve another three years. After six consecutive years, the elder must take a sabbatical-type rest for a year before he can be voted on again. The exception to that sabbatical rule are the five pastors of the church where eldering is part of their job.

Our constitution stipulates that a member should talk to an elder if they believe a candidate to be unqualified. For example, if they are planning on voting “no” or speaking against the nomination during a members’ meeting. That’s simply because you may know something about them that we don’t, and we want to have the opportunity to withdraw their name before coming to a vote if that information proves to be significant. The same holds true for deacon and officer nominations.

It’s worth noting that while we are called in Scripture to obey our elders, we also see that final responsibility for matters of discipline and doctrine rests with the congregation. In places like 1 Cor 5 or the book of Galatians, when a problem arose in the church, the apostle Paul went after the church, not the elders or the pastor. So how can we be congregational in that sense and also obey our elders? To answer that question, take a look at the box chart on your study guide. You’ll see that it lays out how *important* an issue is, on the vertical—and how *clear* it is in Scripture, on the horizontal. What role the congregation plays varies depending on where we are on this chart.

Let’s take a question like “should we nominate Seth to serve as an elder?” Well—that’s pretty important. But while Scripture will give us some basic qualifications, it takes a lot of judgment to determine if Seth should serve as an elder. So it’s in the important and unclear box. Questions in this category are where we should submit to the elders. So we vote on elder candidates, but in doing so we’re really trusting the relationships and the due diligence of the elders in vetting those candidates.

What about something that’s *not* clear and *not* important—like what brand of photocopier we should buy? That’s where we have staff. I would hope that neither the congregation nor the elders would have to weigh in on that decision.

But what if something’s both clear *and* important—like the question of whether Jesus is divine? That’s where the congregation has a role. If the elders were to choose to move against Scripture in an area like this, your job is to remove us as elders and recognize elders who will teach what Scripture is clear on. So most of the votes in members’ meetings are pretty close to unanimous—which is a good thing. It means that we’re trusting our elders and are working well together. But the final “backstop” for issues of discipline and doctrine is not finally the elders, but the congregation.

So all that’s on the office of elder.

## *10:18 / 0:28*

## *Deacons*

We also have deacons & deaconesses—which I’ll just refer to as deacons.

Acts 6 shows how the office of Deacon was established. An issue of logistics threatened to divide the church: Grecian Jews complained against Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. To address this issue of unity, the apostles designated deacons to oversee this administrative challenge.

What are the responsibilities of Deacons? Mainly, they are to promote the unity of the church, acting as shock absorbers and peacemakers. And that’s what we’re primarily looking for as we select them. How do they promote unity? As we see in Acts 6, by managing certain areas of administration—things like serving as deacon of sound, children’s ministry, ushering, community outreach, and so forth.

Unlike the elder position, we do allow women to be deacons (i.e. deaconesses). The deacon position was not set up to have oversight of teaching, and so we see indications in Scripture that the New Testament church had woman deacons[[4]](#footnote-4).

A deacon is nominated by the elders and voted on by the church. Once elected, the deacon can serve three years and then must be off for one year before they can serve another term.

## *Officers and staff*

Those are the two Biblical categories of church leaders. In addition, we have two officers: a church clerk who records members’ meeting minutes and keeps an accurate role of the membership. And a treasurer who is responsible for maintaining proper internal controls and ensuring church funds are deposited wisely. And finally, we have church staff who work for the church. Some staff are elders and some aren’t.

**Prayer**

The last thing I want to point out that undergirds our culture as a church is our life of prayer. We spend a lot of time praying together as a church—both Sunday morning and Sunday night—and even more time individually. Let me close this class with some suggestions of how you can pray for us.

First, I’d encourage you to be regularly praying through the church directory. It’s set up so that if you pray through two pages each day, you’ll get through the whole membership once each month. Now when you do that, you’ll pray for a lot of people you don’t know. But that’s a good thing! Practically, it’ll help you get to know people’s names and faces faster. And beyond that, just like the apostle Paul prayed for the Christians at Rome he’d never met simply because they were in Christ, praying for someone you’ve never met simply because they’re in your church is something that is wonderfully God-honoring because it highlights the bond we have in Christ. So when you pray for these people, just pray good things for them! That they’d have a good quiet time, be faithful in evangelism, be a Godly spouse if they’re married, and so forth.

And second, I’d encourage you to pray for our church as a whole. There are a number of things that we pray for regularly on Sunday night which you’ll see printed on the bookmark in your booklet. That we’d be transparent with each other, that we’d be eager to share our faith—and so forth. Those would be great things to be praying for our church.

***Any final questions?***

1. See Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23, for example. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23, for example. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The other is that an elder may not be a recent convert. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See footnote in most translations after “wives” in 1 Timothy 3:11. What is translated “wives” is really just “women.” Could be either female deacons or the wife of a deacon. Would be odd to have qualifications for a deacon’s wife but not an elder’s wife, though—which leans toward translating it as a female deacon. And in Romans 16:1 Phoebe is called a “deacon” of the church (though could simply mean “servant.”) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)