

SESSION 1: THE CHURCH

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION ONE | THE CHURCH

"Give yourself to the Church. You that are members of the Church have not found it perfect and I hope that you feel almost glad that you have not. If I had never joined a Church till I had found one that was perfect, I would never have joined one at all! And the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect Church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us"

- Charles Spurgeon

GETTING STARTED

When you hear the word "church", what images come to mind? Positive or negative experiences? Good or bad times?

QUESTION 1

The Bible uses all types of metaphors to describe the church. Which of these¹ listed below do you most identify with? Which seems most difficult to understand? Please explain your answer.

• The Family of God.

- The Pillar and foundation of truth.
- The Household of God.
- Christ's flock.
- The Temple of the Spirit.
- Bride of Christ.

QUESTION 2

The Greek Word for church used in scripture is *ekklesia*. This word defines those in the church as "the called-out ones." In your own words, describe who these people are, where are they called out from, what they are called out to, and what they are called out for.

For additional insights read: Mark 3:13 | 1Peter2:9 | Matthew 5:13-16

QUESTION 3

By committing to a local expression of God's church we confront the idols of individualism, push back on the tendencies of polarization, combat the sway of secularization, step out of the trap of consumerism, and receive the blessing of community by knowing and being known². How does committing to a local body help with these things?

Follow Up: Getting personal, which of the idols above (individualism, polarization, secularization, consumerism, etc.) do you find yourself struggling most with? How does the church help protect your heart and course correct that tendency in us?

QUESTION 4

On pg. 11 of the Covenant Community workbook, it states: "You do not need to belong to a church to be saved. However, you do need to belong to a church to be obedient." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?

Follow Up: What are some of the benefits of belonging to a specific local church rather than just identifying with the "universal church"?

¹ For Scripture references, see pg. 8 of Covenant Community workbook.

² See Pg. 10 of Covenant Community Workbook

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION ONE | THE CHURCH

QUESTION 5

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. These verses urge us not to "neglect meeting together"; what difference do you feel it makes in your life personally to actively belong to and do life within a local body of believers? How does your life and spiritual journey suffer when you "neglect" those relationships and opportunities?

APPLICATION & PRAYER

Take some time to read through Ephesians 1:17-21 as a group. In these verses, we find Paul's prayer for the church in Ephesus that illustrates how we can also pray for our church. In your remaining time...

- ...reflect and discuss the specific things Paul asked for.
- ...pray the same for your group, your campus, and for Summit View as a whole.
- ...conclude by briefly discussing your insights and what God has revealed to you about your relationship with Himself, each other, and Summit View through His word and this week's content.

5

SESSION 1: THE CHURCH

SESSION 2: THE CHURCH AS COVENANT COMMUNITY

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION TWO THE CHURCH AS COVENANT COMMUNITY

It's a privilege to belong to the new-covenant people of God: to be part of those who have been saved through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus, who possess the indwelling Holy Spirit, who are joined in a local gathering, who assemble to hear the word preached, who engage in corporate worship, who are led by qualified pastors/elders, and who enjoy the wonder of baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is an awesome thing to be part of those who commit to practicing the "one another's" of Scripture, and who scatter to fulfill the Great Commandment (love your neighbor) and the Great Commission (make disciples of all nations). – Tony Merida

GETTING STARTED

What is something you are committed to? What about it elicits your loyalty? How is it evident to others that you are committed to it?

QUESTION 1

In the spirit of transparency and vulnerability with those in your Group, how important would you say the church is to you? Considering your life rhythms, where do you feel it falls on your list of priorities?

Follow Up: According to Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 5:25, what does God's commitment to the church look like?

Follow Up: What does Hebrews 10:25 say about our commitment to the church in light of God's example?

QUESTION 2

Considering your own experiences, and the examples found in scripture, how would you define a covenant?

Examples for reference: Genesis 9:8-17 (Noah), Genesis 12:1-7, 15 (Abraham), Exodus 3:7-15 (Moses), Exodus 24:7-8 | Deuteronomy 26:17 | Joshua 9:15-16 | Nehemiah 9:38 (Israel), and Jeremiah 31 | Luke 22:20 | Hebrews 9:15, 12:24 | 2 Corinthians 3:6 (New Covenant through Jesus).

Follow Up: Considering God has been entering into covenants with his people all throughout history, why would it be important for His people to enter into covenants with one another? What comforts / confidence does this bring to our faith? (Hint: consider the commitment we make in living out the "One another's" of the New Testament)

QUESTION 3

Read Romans 12:1-8 and 1 Peter 4:8-11. What do each of these passages teach us about the importance of our participation in the local church body?

Follow Up: What would you say to someone who claims to be a follower of Jesus, yet doesn't seem to exhibit the same values and priorities in commitment to the local body as described in these verses?

QUESTION 4

On pg. 18 & 19 of the Covenant Community workbook, benefits of becoming a covenant partner are listed:

Spend some time reading through the following complimentory passages, then consider the questions below:

• Participation: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION TWO THE CHURCH AS COVENANT COMMUNITY

• Partnership: 1 Peter 2:4-5

• Protection: Hebrews 13:7

• Provision: Acts 2:44-46

• Proclamation: Acts 4:4 & John 13:34-35

Questions:

- 1. Of the five benefits listed, which is the most compelling to you? Why?
- 2. How does it contribute to your spiritual growth?
- 3. Is there a benefit you find yourself avoiding or withdrawing from?
- 4. How do you think that avoidance impacts the rest of the church body?

PARTICIPATION PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS OF COVENANT PARTNERSHIP PROVISION PROCLAMATION

APPLICATION & PRAYER

At Summit View, we believe that Covenant Partnership helps us better fulfill our vision and mission to make disciples, plant church, and see God's kingdom advance. Close your time together praying specifically for Summit View and your campus.

Reference 1 Peter 3:8 as you consider how specifically to pray:

Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 1 Peter 3:8

Notes for leaders: Throughout the series, feel free to point people to the upcoming sessions as relevant questions arise (what we believe, church structure, etc.). Additionally, encourage them to attend one of the upcoming Q&A nights with our Elders & Teaching Team!



SESSION 4: GOSPEL CENTERED STRATEGIES

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION THREE VISION & MISSION

GETTING STARTED

Vision statements have the ability to inspire and motivate others towards a common goal or concept. Consider the following vision statements from familiar companies:

Amazon: "To be Earth's most customer-centric company, where customers can find and discover anything they might want to buy online."

IKEA: "To create a better everyday life for the many people."

Apple: "To make the best products on earth, and to leave the world better than we found it."

At a glance, it's easy to recognize that every decision made by these companies is influenced by their overarching vision.

Summit View's vision statement: to see a movement of disciple-making churches advancing God's Kingdom throughout the world.

How do you think Summit View's vision statement impacts the decision we make as a church? How important do you think it is for the whole body of Summit View to fully understand and be in alignment with it? Why?

QUESTION 1

Read Acts 2:42-47. The early church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. In your own words, fill in the table below:

	What is it?	Why is it important for Christ followers to be devoted to this?
Apostles' teaching		
Fellowship		
Breaking of Bread		
Prayers		

QUESTION 2

In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), Jesus tells us to go and make disciples; how would you define a good disciple? What are the characteristics of a committed disciple?

Follow Up: Whose role is it to make disciples? Why do you think some of us shy away from it?

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION THREE VISION & MISSION

QUESTION 3

The word Christian only appears 3 times in the Bible, but the word disciple appears 269 times! What does this tell you? What is the difference between a Christian and a disciple?

QUESTION 4

What are some of the necessary elements for successful discipleship?

QUESTION 5

Read Acts 1:8. In this passage, we are called God's witnesses. What are the practical implications of that delineation? (i.e. not His lawyer or judge)

Follow Up: In the passage, Luke refers to specific tiers of geographical influence (Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth). In your own sphere of influence, what might be categorized as your "Jerusalem" (city you live in), Judea (county), "Samaria" (cross-cultural locally), and the ends of the Earth (global)? How might you prayerfully take steps to live out the call to be a witness in those spaces?

QUESTION 6

Read Ephesians 4:11-16. What does the passage say about the purpose of the church?

Follow Up: How might you champion those purposes within the context of the local church you call home?

APPLICATION & PRAYER

SUMMIT VIEW VISION

TO SEE A MOVEMENT OF disciple making churches ADVANCING GOD'S KINGDOM THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

SUMMIT VIEW MISSION

TO EQUIP AND EMPOWER THE BODY OF CHRIST TO LEAD AND IMPACT EVERY SPHERE OF LIFE WITH GOSPEL-CENTERED LIVING.

Spend some time considering and discussing as a group how you sense God might be inviting you to further step into the vision and mission of Summit View Church. How might you, as a disciple of Jesus, reorient your life to embody that of a disciple-maker?

2 Thessalonians 3:1 reads, "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you." Close your time praying together for the gospel to spread throughout Vancouver, Clark County, SW Washington, Portland Metro-Area, and the world as we step out in faith to proclaim it.

13

SESSION 4: GOSPEL CENTERED STRATEGIES

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION FOUR GOSPEL-CENTERED STRATEGIES

GETTING STARTED

We make time for the things that are important for us; what are some things over the past week or month that you have put time, energy, and resources toward? Friends? Family? A new TV show? Playoff baseball?

QUESTION 1

The Gospel can be summarized in four words: CREATION, FALL, REDEMPTION, RESTORATION. Read through the following verses and discuss how you might best tie each together in a wholistic gospel presentation:

CREATION

Genesis 1:1 | Genesis 1:27-28

FALL

Genesis 3:17-19 Romans 5:12 | Romans 6:23

REDEMPTION

Genesis 3:15 | 2 Corinthians 5:21 | Colossians 3:23-24

RESTORATION

Revelation 21:1-4

QUESTION 2: CONNECTED TO CHRIST

When we are soundly connected to Christ through the power of the Gospel, three holy desires take root in our lives:

- 1. To tell others about Christ
- 2. To gather for worship
- 3. To become more like Jesus

Which of the four components of the gospel (creation, fall, redemption, restoration) do you feel fuels each of those desires in you?

Follow Up: Which of these desires do you feel comes most naturally to you? Are there any you struggle with? Elaborate.

QUESTION 3: CONNECTED TO COMMUNITY

Read John 13:35. In this passage we find of picture of a countercultural community—the Kingdom of God. As citizens of this "backwards kingdom", we demonstrate to the world the transformational power of the Gospel. What difference has this transformational power made in your own life? What about its impact on those around you who don't yet know Jesus?

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION FOUR GOSPEL-CENTERED STRATEGIES

QUESTION 4: CONNECTED TO CALLING

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. Paul teaches us that there is one body, but many members, and every member is given gifts for the benefit of the body. For our church body to truly be healthy, YOU are essential. Have you discovered the gifts God has given you? If so, have you found a way to use them at Summit View?

Follow Up: If not, we invite you to discover how God has gifted you! Check out <u>Discovering Your Divine Design</u>, one of our School of Discipleship classes at <u>www.summitview.net/school</u>.

QUESTION 5: CONNECTED TO OUTREACH

Read Jeremiah 29:7. What does it mean to "seek the welfare of the city" in which God has sent placed you? What do you think would happen to your city or county if we prayed for it regularly and sought its flourishing?

Follow Up: Take some time right now or at the conclusion of your time to pray for your neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and greater communities.

QUESTION 6: CONNECTED TO CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. Gospel-Centered living means we understand and see how the Gospel makes great impact in all that we do. Outside of your Sunday and group experience, where do you see the Gospel at work within your life?

QUESTION 7: CONNECTED TO THE NATIONS

Read Psalm 46:10. What does it mean for God to be "exalted amongst the nations"? Where do you see evidence of His exaltation in the world today? Where do you desire to see His name made known?

Follow Up: How might you contribute to making His name known and exalted around the world? Have you considered participating in a short-term mission trip or financially supporting a long-term missionary?

APPLICATION & PRAYER

"Revival is the visitation of God which brings to life Christians who have been sleeping and restores a deep sense of God's near presence and holiness. Thence springs a vivid sense of sin and a profound exercise of heart in repentance, praise, and love, with an evangelistic outflow." – Pastor J.I. Packer

When we are connected to Christ, our community & calling, outreach, cultural transformation, and God's mission in this world, we find ourselves amid a holy movement of God.

We invite you to close your time together praying for your communities, and that our church family would get to see a movement of God in our lifetime. We desire to see people experience God in a fresh, new way and for God's presence to become palpable to His people as we seek to be His hands & feet to those around us. In this next season we pray that all those who encounter Summit View Church would encounter the living God. That they would respond with a joyful heart, a repentant spirit, and a desire to share the hope they have found with those around them.

SESSION 5: WHAT WE BELIEVE

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION FIVE WHAT WE BELIEVE

GETTING STARTED

Our theology, the way we think about God, shapes the way we see and interpret our world. It helps define, shape, and guide our everyday decisions. These core beliefs are essential to defining us as Christians and shaping the way we live.

How do you see the things you believe impacting the way you live? Where do you see incongruence between your behavior and what you say you believe? What might be a simple action you could take today to begin to bring those into alignment?

QUESTION 1

"We believe in a Triune God who exists in three equally divine persons: Father, Son, & Holy Spirit."

Which person of the Trinity do you find yourself thinking about or relating to most often? Which do you find yourself relating to the least? Why do you think that is?

QUESTION 2

"The Bible is the final authority in all matters regarding faith and practice for both the individual believer and the church"

What gives Scripture its authority? Why is it important for us to submit ourselves to it?

Follow Up: Can you think of a time where something in the Bible challenged your beliefs? How did you navigate that struggle?

QUESTION 3

Sin is the instinct of rebellion inside every person. Sin is our inability to reach God's standard. Sin is not just a matter of behavior; sin is a matter of our nature. We sin because we are sinners."

Genesis 3 records the story of the fall when Adam and Eve sinned against God; when you think about sin and misery in the world, what comes to mind?

Follow Up: It's one thing to acknowledge the brokenness in the world around us, but what about the brokenness inside each of us?

¹Deuteronomy 6:4; Hebrews 1:3; John 14:26

² 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION FIVE WHAT WE BELIEVE

QUESTION 4

"Salvation involves the redemption of the whole person and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ."

On page 42 of the Covenant Community workbook, three theological terms are used to describe components of our salvation:

JUSTIFICATION³

SANCTIFICATION⁴

GLORIFICATION⁵

In your own words, define each of these terms; where do you see them at work in your life today?

Follow Up: Why would it be important to understand all three of these concepts when talking about salvation?

QUESTION 5

"The local church is a community of believers whose geographical location and common passion unite them in the cause of Christ"

We believe that Jesus uses His people, empowered by the Holy Spirit, within the local Church to build His kingdom. As members of the body of Christ, you and I become essential to His divine design. How might that knowledge impact how you view your life? Your resources? Your circumstances?

Follow Up: How might an even deeper commitment to the cause of Christ impact your everyday decisions?

QUESTION 6

As believers, we adhere to the two sacraments, or ordinances, Jesus gave his disciples: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Communion). According to Romans 6:3-4 and Luke 22:19, what do these acts symbolize?

ACTION ITEM:

If you consider yourself a Christ follower and have not been baptized yet, connect with a pastor, elder, or staff member at your campus! They would love to have a conversation with you and connect you with the next opportunity to be baptized at your campus.⁶

³ Romans 5:1; Titus 3:7; Romans 5:9

⁴1 Thessalonians 5:23; John 17:17; Galatians 2:20

⁵ 1 John 3:2; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 3:21

⁶ NOTE: Life Group Leaders – please make yourself available to help facilitate that connection & conversation.

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION FIVE WHAT WE BELIEVE

QUESTION 7

"Satan and his fallen angels are created beings whose goal is to destroy the relationship between mankind and God. He attempts this through deception, lies, accusations, and temptations"

Read Ephesians 6:12. How should this knowledge impact the way we view the opposition we face as believers in this world? How might it influence your view of frustrating or hurtful people hostile to the Gospel?

Follow Up: Do you tend to over-estimate or under-estimate the influence of Satan within our world?

QUESTION 8

"God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the righteous bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord"

Read Matthew 28:18-20. We know that Jesus is returning "soon" and with His return will come His final judgement. How does that knowledge impact your sense of urgency around Jesus' call to go and make disciples?

APPLICATION & PRAYER

As we wrap up this week's study of What We Believe, we invite you to take a moment to connect with God. It can be so easy to engage this type of content devoid of any relational connection with God. When we study Scripture, our desire is to grow in relationship with Him and His people.

Take some time as you close out your group time in prayer. Consider using a prayer like this:

God, if you exist, and you can hear this prayer, I want to tell you that I am an honest seeker after the truth. Help me to see that these things are true. Help me to believe your Word. Help me to believe that each of these things we studied today are true. Help us to trust in you, to trust in Jesus as our Savior, and follow Him wherever He and the Spirit may lead.

SESSION 6: DISTINCTIVES

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION SIX DISTINCTIVES

GETTING STARTED

When trying something for the first time, do you like to read the instructions or figure things out as you go?

QUESTION 1

This week we learned about our Distinctives, or non-essential doctrines. If they are not essential, why should we spend time learning about them?

How does an understanding of these contribute to unity within the body? Give an example.

What does it look like to disagree on non-essential doctrine, but to continue to be a part of the body?

QUESTION 2: CONTINUATIONIST

Continuationist is a big word! Considering what was shared Sunday and what you may have read in your Workbook, describe what it means.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:7 and 14:12. For what purpose are spiritual gifts given? Who receives them and when?

Follow Up: Read John 16:13-14. Why does it say we need the Holy Spirit? How does the presence of the Holy Spirit impact your daily living?

QUESTION 3: GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Read Psalm 3:8, Ephesians 1:4-14, Psalm 65:9-11, Acts 17:26, and James 4:13-16. What, according to these passages is the sovereignty of God, and why is it important that we understand it?

Follow Up: Do you find God's sovereignty comforting or challenging? Why?

As you walk through these next sets of questions, remember to do so gently. Many people carry past hurt with them into this conversation. Our desire is to build unity through safe, respectful dialogue, not to beat people over the head with God's word.

QUESTION 4: COMPLEMENTARIANISM

Read Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:21-24. If men and women are equal in essence, dignity, and worth, why—according to Genesis—might God give people different roles in the family and the church?

Follow Up: When lived out according to God's plan, what do you think this communicates to the world?

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION SIX DISTINCTIVES

QUESTION 5: GENDER & SEXUALITY

Read Psalm 139:13-16, Romans 1:26-28, and Genesis 1:26-27. Given the confusing minefield that gender and sexuality can be in our culture, it is imperative we cling to what God says over what the world says. According to these passages, what does the Bible say about gender and sexuality in contrast to what the world says?

Follow Up: Considering what the Bible says about both God's character AND gender & sexuality, what does it tell us about how we are to view and interact with those who do not hold to a Biblical perspective? How might we practically model the love of Jesus, while also holding fast to our convictions?

QUESTION 6: MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY

In the Covenant Community Workbook, it states:

We are both recipients of the mission of God and participants in the mission of God.

What practically does that mean?

What might need to change in your life to better align with God's invitation to both receive and contribute to the mission of God?

APPLICATION & PRAYER

After processing together our theological Distinctives, how has your understanding of God's design been impacted? Are there areas you find yourself still wrestling or unsure? What steps might you take to grow in your understanding? Please know that you are not alone! Our Pastors, Elders, and Ministry Directors are all here to help you on your journey; if you have questions, would like resource recommendations, or just need to sit and process with someone, please reach out to us!



COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION SEVEN LEADERSHIP & STRUCTURE

GETTING STARTED

What does well thought-out structure, organization, and clarity communicate about a place or organization? What is your immediate reaction to a disorganized or chaotic environment?

Follow Up: Consider what a church reflecting both scenarios might look like. Which would you rather be a part of?

QUESTION 1

Read Ephesians 4:11-16. If everyone is part of a local body of believers, why are there distinctions in roles?

QUESTION 2

According to Titus 1:5-9, 1 Timothy 3:2-7, and 1 Peter 5:1-3, what are the biblical qualifications of an Elder-Pastor?

Follow Up: Out of these qualifications, which one(s) stand out to you the most? Are there any that surprise you?

Follow Up: Why do you think these character qualifications are so important? What might happen if one was overlooked or missed when considering someone for Eldership?

Does anyone at Summit View come to mind when you consider these qualifications? Consider nominating them for Eldership at info@summitview.net.

QUESTION 3

According to 1 Timothy 3:8-13, what are the Biblical qualifications for a Deacon?

Follow Up: What do you think Paul means when he says that Deacons "gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus"?

Follow Up: What is the primary difference between an Elder-Pastor and a Deacon?

(NOTE FOR LEADERS: If you are unsure how to guide this discussion, the primary difference we are looking to emphasize is that both declare the rule and reign of Christ, however their methods are different; Elder-Pastors primarily lead through Biblical engagement and teaching, where Deacons do so through serving the body).

Does anyone at Summit View come to mind when you consider these qualifications? Consider nominating them for Deaconship at info@summitview.net.

QUESTION 4

"Church planting is the best strategy for evangelism, discipleship, and community outreach." (Workbook pg. 57)

It can be easy to jump straight to international mission trips in our minds when we think about reaching the lost, yet we have found that both Biblically and practically, the greatest impact often comes through the local church. Does this surprise you?

Follow Up: How might that change the way you think about your own ability to contribute to God's missional work?

COVENANT COMMUNITY | SESSION SEVEN LEADERSHIP & STRUCTURE

QUESTION 5

How does understanding Summit View's leadership, structure, and model of ministry impact your understanding of our vision to see disciple-making churches advancing God's kingdom throughout the world?

QUESTION 6

Leadership can be a challenging topic for people; some have been hurt by those in authority in the past, where others have been raised with a value of autonomy and self-reliance. How might a Biblical view of authority and leadership shift our perspective and attitude toward the leadership structure of Summit View Church?

APPLICATION & PRAYER

Over the past seven weeks, we have shared with our Summit View family a vision and paradigm we believe God is calling us into this next season. As you conclude your time as a group, we invite you to pray through the following:

- That a discipleship culture would form and become normalized as a natural part of Christian living.
- That faithful Pastor-Elders would administer the Scriptures well, equipping & empowering the committed to do the work of the ministry.
- That a hunger for the Word and the Gospel would rise up among the committed that they might guide others to it and guard each other in it.
- That transparent, meaningful relationships would become an intrinsic part of Summit View's culture, and that the disconnected and anonymous would become outliers.
- That the preaching of God's Word would be biblically vigilant and Holy Spirit imbued.
- That our Pastor-Elders would remain above reproach—kept from temptation, complacency, idols, and worldliness.
- That committed adults within Summit View's body would take up the mantle of discipling the next generation—partnering with, not relying solely upon, our programming.
- That those called to teach at Summit View would grow in dedication to God's Word in both the public and private spheres of their lives.
- That those committed to Summit View would share the Gospel—even THIS week—and that they would begin see those around them respond favorably to the Gospel.
- That the committed would emulate the heart of God and represent Jesus well in their workplaces this week—both as an example to others and in the quiet moments only God will see.

