

House of Belonging Discussion Guide - "Life Together" (Session 1)



Introduction: "House of the Lord" & "House of Belonging"

We are embarking on a 40 day journey asking an important question as a church:

What does it mean to belong at Bethel?

Through this journey we want to invite you to reflect on Bethel's key values that shape who we are becoming as a church family:

a "House of the Lord," which is what Bethel means, and a "House of Belonging."

If we are following our mission - **Becoming like Christ, and sharing him with others** - then we will naturally engage in the work on building a house of belonging.

Our goal is to re-affirm what this means for every person at Bethel, and allow unity for what we care about most to guide our lives together in Christ.

1. How did you become connected with Bethel?
 2. What role as Bethel played in your walk with Christ?
 3. What does it mean (*for you*) to belong?
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Read: Read Romans 12:3-16 aloud.

After reading, give everyone 3 minutes of silence (*set a timer*) to reflect on the passage. Consider some of the following questions during this time:

- How does this passage give me joy, encouragement, or hope?
- How does this passage challenge me?
- What does God invite us to do in response to this passage?

Reflect: How does a *house* become a *home*?

1. How have relationships shaped your faith?
Are there key people that God used to encourage you? How?
2. What do you think are the obstacles for people in the church experiencing deeper life together?



3. What is the difference between deep community with other Christians compared to relationships that faith in Christ is not present?
4. What are false expectations that people have about Christian community?
5. What might be God's response to some of these expectations? Consider the examples of the following statements from Romans 12:
 - a. Sincere love (Rom. 16:9)
 - b. Sharing with one another in need & Hospitality (Rom. 16:13)
 - c. Mutual rejoicing & mourning (Rom. 16:15)
 - d. Harmony and Humility (Rom. 16:16)

**See also Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25, Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12:12-20*

Summative Thought: *Since God has brought us into community within himself through Jesus Christ, how we practice life together can now be completely transformed. We don't look for justification or validation in our relationships, because God has already justified us. In community, we don't think of ourselves, but look outward to how we can share genuine love with one another. In Christ, God calls us to be present and intentional. This is how a house becomes a home among our church family, one body, fully embracing life together in Christ.*

Challenge: The next 40 Days...Remember and embrace how God has called you to belong in Christ and with one another.

1. How can you more fully receive and affirm the truth that you belong in Christ, and that you have a home in him?

"...That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death— to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ." (Lord's Day 1, HC)

2. How can you seek to more fully participate in life together with others over the next few weeks? What must change in your life for this to take place?
3. How can you offer belonging to others (*not just for yourself*)? Who can you seek to invite and include in God's vision of home and belonging at Bethel? *Consider a few people you would like to reach to and do some "house building" with in the upcoming weeks.*

Prayer: Discuss how you as a group can support each other in these areas. Spend time in prayer for one another.