

**New Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church
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“CHURCH ENGAGEMENT

Thinking deeply about engagement and re-engagement. Disengagement required re-engagement. How deep is the dis-engagement because that determines how deep the re-engagement must be. This is not for every member to hear at this point, but leaders must plan sermons and lessons to challenge members to re-engage through attending public worship services.

Perhaps the most prevalent topic of interest is how do we re-engage church members so that they come back to services at the church house. The conclusion seems to be that many may never come back, so how do we more effectively engage them digitally? The accepted assumption seems to be that the COVID-19 pandemic created this problem of disengagement. That certainly may be the case but at least be open to explore the possibility that the pandemic did not create the problem but revealed that we had a problem. The idea of engagement and re-engagement certainly suggests the concept of disengagement.

Definition of terms:

Church: the word translated “church” in the English Bible is **ekklesia**.

The word is the Greek words Kaleo (to call), with the prefix ek (out).
Therefore, the word means the called-out ones.

The church, of course, is not a building but a group of special people who belong to God by not only creation but also salvation through Jesus Christ. We are his representatives on earth and called to bring glory to his name.

Engage: to become involved with (someone or something).

The people of God are to be involved with God in a special and unique fellowship and relationship. The Bible is a book about engagement and relationships. Tonight, I want to focus on the Christians relationship and involvement with God, each other, Satan and the world or non-Christians. Christians must be challenged with the question, when is disengagement from public worship disobedience.

Let us not reduce engagement to attendance. Should we equate attendance at the place of worship with hearts being engaged with God at worship? Should we seek to get people's hearts back to worshipping God more than their bodies in a place of worship? Is it possible that spiritual distance from the God of the house could be hidden from others and ourselves by physical proximity to the house of God? Is it logical to assume that a worshipping heart might eventually seek other worshipping hearts and, finally, a house of worshippers?

Isaiah 29: 13

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:”

Matthew 15:8

“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”

1. Christians engaging God.

Can a person be more dedicated to a site or service than they are to the Savior who they proclaim to be the center of the service at the site?

Fellowship with God at the center – 1 John 1:3

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

A. Christians engaging God the Father.

- The greatest commandment is to love God supremely with your whole being.
- Do you suppose devotion to God (which would include prayer and study) should evidence itself by dedication to God and His kingdom?
- What might a conversation between God the Father and a believer be about the church? Every believer needs to discuss church engagement with God.
- Worship is not watching. Participants and not spectators and, therefore, critics.

Deuteronomy 6:5

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

Matthew 22: 37-40

37. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38. This is the first and greatest commandment.

39. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

B. Christians engaging God the Son.

(He relocated to engage us. He became one of us to engage us.)

- Does the church sometimes, in defiance of Christ, offer a form of discipleship that is without demand?

Luke 9:23

“And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

- If believers follow Christ, where might he lead us?
- Might my testimony be that, at this time, Christ is not leading me to be physically engaged with the local church meeting, even though I go to other public places?
- Can the healthy believer, who is publicly engaged with others away from church gathering, engage with this testimony, *“ In the name of Jesus, I declare and decree that Hebrews 10:25 does not apply to me. Glory, bless his name”*?

C. Christians engaging God the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit baptizes, or places us in the body of Christ.
- He works through us with other Christians.
- The Holy Spirit can be quenched and grieved.

I Thessalonians 5:19

“Quench not the Spirit.”

Ephesians 4:30

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

2. Christians engaging other Christians.

A. Christians operating as a body, building, and assembly.

I Corinthians 12:7

“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

Ephesians 4:16

“From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

I Corinthians 3:9

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.”

B. Christians practicing the “one anothers” of the Bible.

- There are at least fifty-nine “one anothers” in the Bible.
- To obey the “one anothers,” you need to be engaged with another. Not in isolation, but community.
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C. Christians united by a common faith.

Jude v.3

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

3. Christians engaging the world.

A. Christians engaging the god of this world.

2 Corinthians 4:4

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Ephesians 6:12

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

2 Corinthians 2:11

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

2 Corinthians 10:4

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”

I John 4:4

“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

B. Christians living in the world without loving the world.

1 John 2:15-17

15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

John 17:15

“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”

C. Christians reaching the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ and making disciples.

Matthew 28: 19-20

19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.