



Our Strategy and Structure



# essentials]





# Welcome!

Welcome to **Essentials 3: Our Strategy and Structure**. We're glad you've chosen to find out more about *Trinity church of Christ*, what our mission is, how we strive to accomplish that mission, and our church and leadership structure.

## Our Strategy:

The first church gave us the example for accomplishing the **mission of Jesus**, which we model.

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”*  
~Acts 2:42-47

The mission given to us by **Jesus Christ** is this:

*“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*  
~Matthew 28:18-20

## Make Disciples:

The mission received from Jesus was for each of His followers to accomplish. Just as they did their part to accomplish this task so too must we do our part in continuing His mission today and in our communities. Therefore, our strategy depends on following the actions Jesus prescribed.

*“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*  
~2 Peter 3:9

By Christ's authority we...

Go  
Make  
Baptize  
Teach  
Obey

(Matthew 28:18-20)

Our strategy also depends on structuring our efforts around the actions of the first Christian church...

Devoted time to the apostles' teaching  
Engaged in Fellowship  
Praying regularly  
Meeting together  
Giving / tithing  
Eating together  
Giving Praise to God

(Acts 2:42-47)

Our strategy is dependent on our commitment to Biblical statements and structure which have unified *Trinity church of Christ* in making true Christ-followers who learn from one another in fellowship.

*"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." ~1 Corinthians 9:22-23*

We exist to make **Christ-followers** through loving, personal relationships. In these relationships we seek to train people and create environments that foster kingdom growth and proliferation of Jesus' mission.

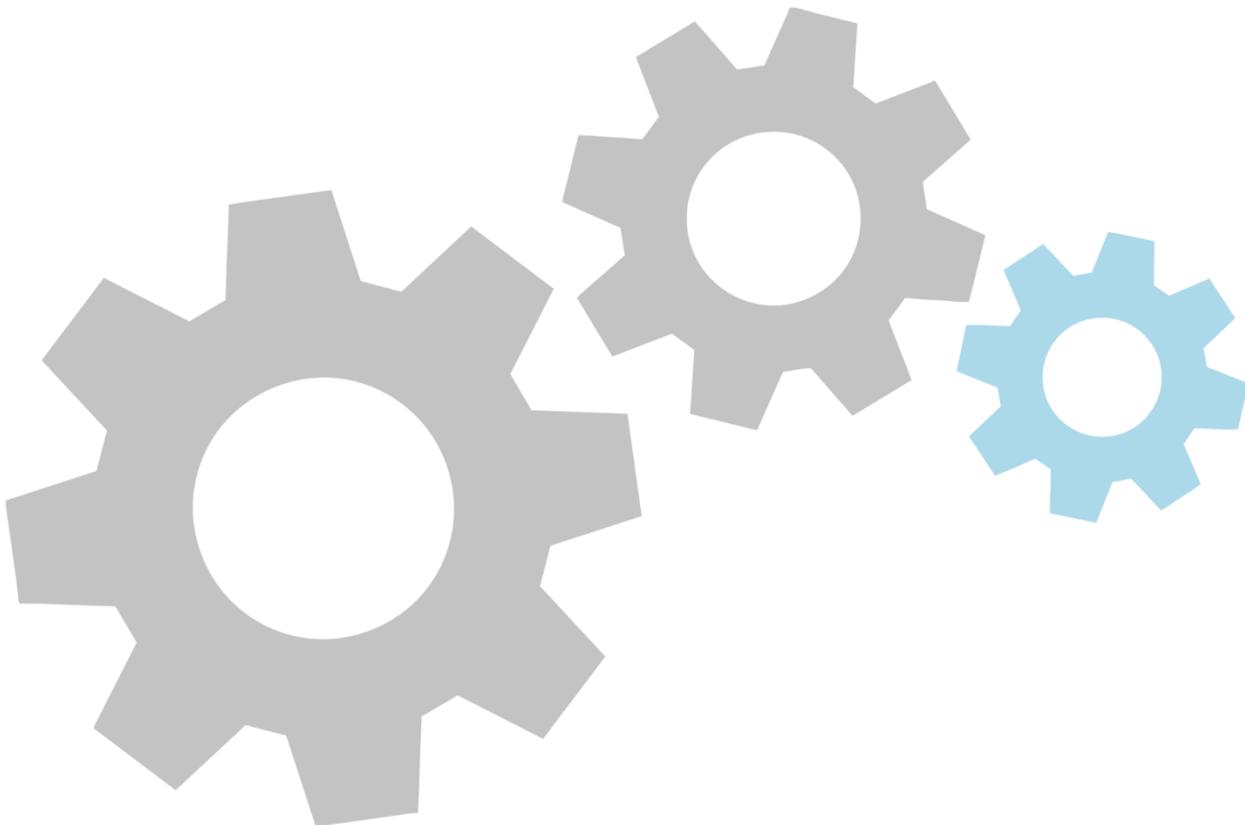
As a church we are relationship-driven, not program-driven. Programs, people, environments, titles, materials, and even leaders will change. Jesus never used a strategy based on buildings, budgets, and bodies. His strategy was to make disciples through **loving** people. We must do the same:

- Each visitor should be made to feel important and welcome.
- We don't invite people to worship and then ignore them.
- Just within our community, there are 60,000+ unchurched people.

- Small groups are key to building relationships and making disciples
- Love God, love others, and serve the world... together

*Genesis 2:18; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Mark 3:14*

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” ~Matthew 22:37-39*



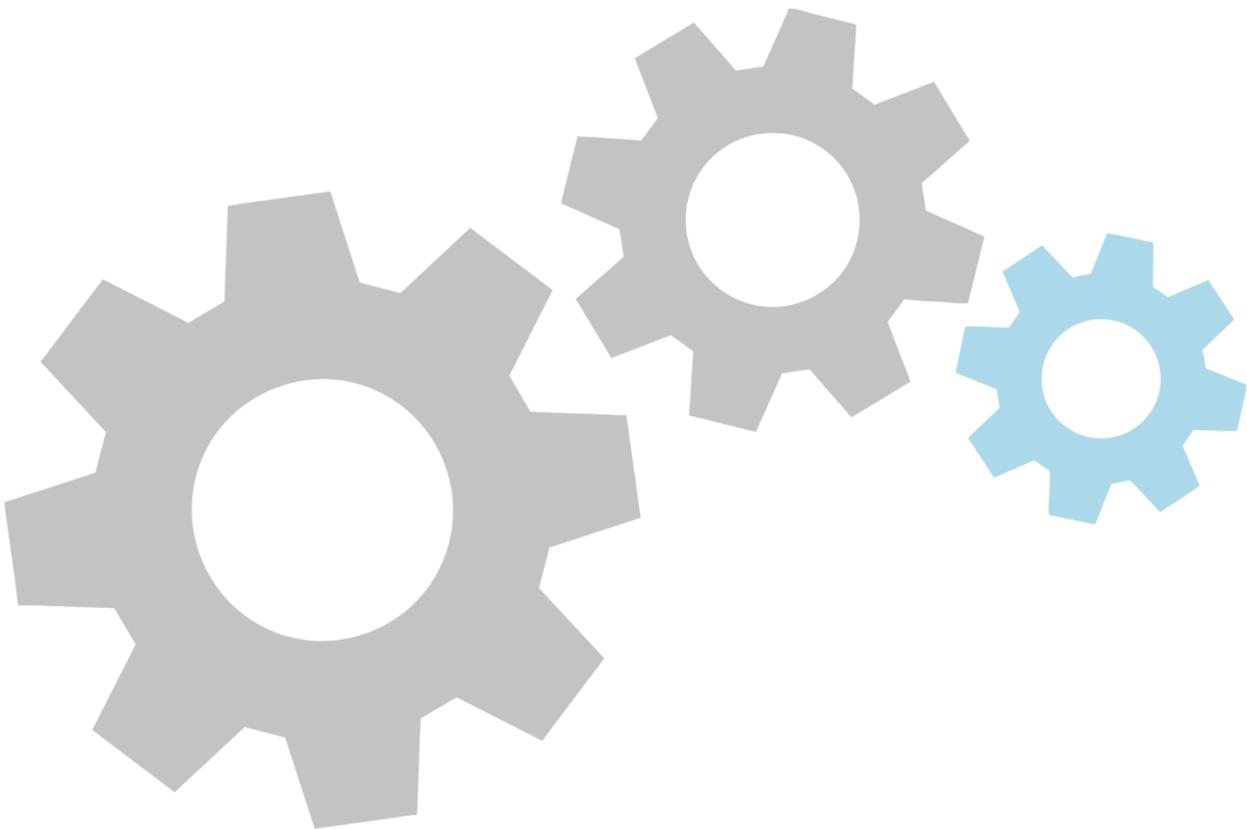
**Your notes and questions:**

Use this page for notes or write down any questions you might want to ask. You may discuss them in class or later, after the class.

**Table Discussion Question:**

*Why did you first come to **Trinity church of Christ**?*

*What was your experience like on your first visit?*



## Our Structure:

Our Structure is prescribed by God and is what unifies us as a body which is built on a Biblical foundation.

*“For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” ~1 Corinthians 14:33,40*

**Trinity church of Christ** is a non-denominational, elder-led church where the elders are **Biblically chosen** by the members.

*“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.” ~1 Peter 5:1-3*

A Biblically based structure is what promotes unity and discourages division. Since any attitude that causes division and disunity is sin, we only vote on certain items.

- The annual budget.
- The election of Elders.
- The calling of a minister(s).

Jesus prayed for the **unity** of His church:

*“that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” ~John 17:21-23*

The church (flock) is cared for and led by its **Elders**.

**Trinity church of Christ** has a leadership of elders, overseers, who guide the church in developing the spirit of Christ-like servant leadership.

*“Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived he said to them, ‘...Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be pastors of the church of God.’ ~Acts 20:17,18,28*

*“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, who-ever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to*

*be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” ~Matthew 20:25-28*

### Qualifications for Eldership:

*“Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.” ~1 Timothy 3:1-7*

Based on this passage an Elder must:

- Meet the Biblical job description.
- Be male.
- Desire the job.

### Responsibilities of Elders:

Theological Doctrine  
Philosophical Direction  
Spiritual Direction  
Approval of staff decisions

Approval of the Budget  
Approval of Ministries  
Approval of Missions  
Meet Regularly

### Biblical Responsibility of the church to Elders:

Submit to authority of leaders.  
Resolve conflict Biblically.  
Do the ministry of the church.  
Encourage and pray for leaders.  
Support the mission of the church.

Hebrews 13:17  
Matthew 18:15-20  
1 Timothy 3:8-12  
Hebrews 3:12-13  
Matthew 28:18-20

Every member of *Trinity church of Christ* shares the same basic responsibilities of service under the leadership guidance of the Elders. By following the direction of, and in partnership with the church elders, ministers and staff, we work together to make all the various ministries work to the glory of God.

*“All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people and may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.” ~2 Corinthians 4:15*

**Our Elders:**

**Our Ministers:**

**Our Staff:**

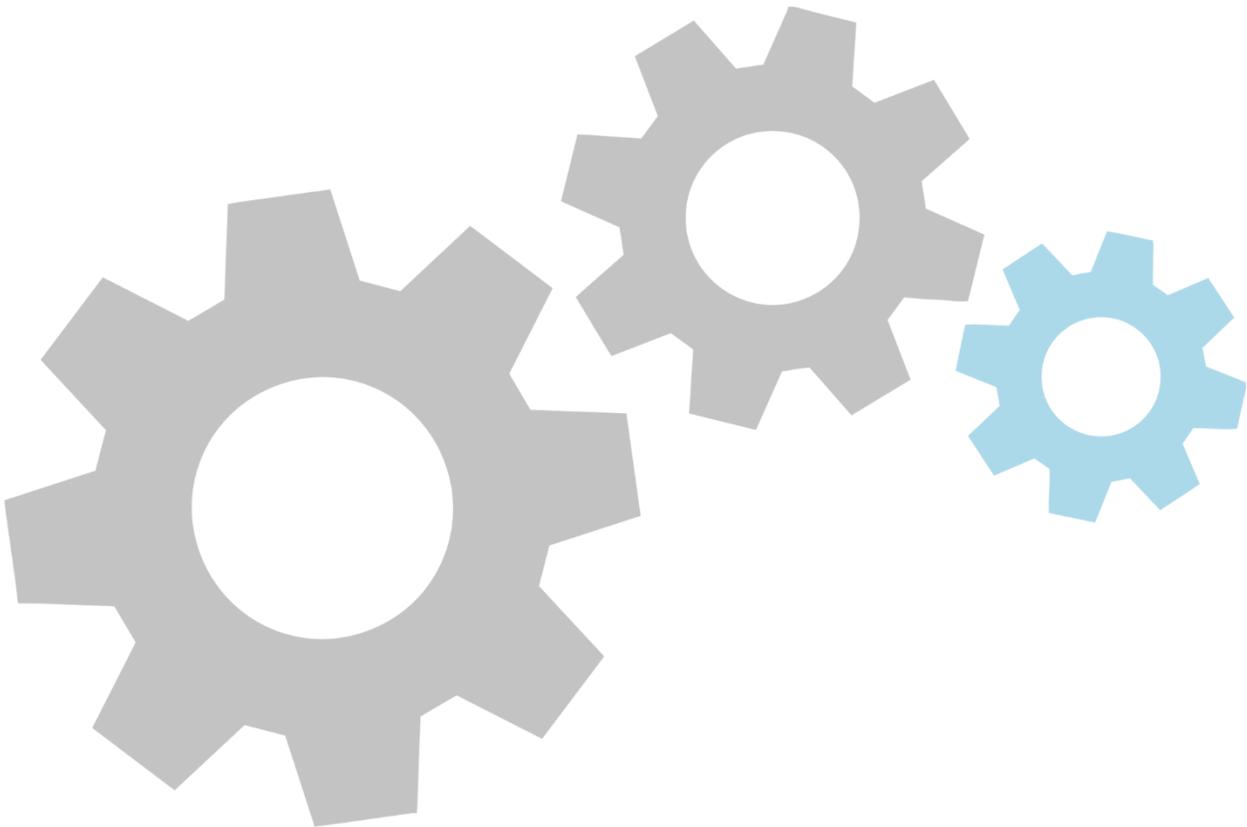


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*Why do you think a practical strategy and Biblical structure is valuable?*



## Further actions of Christ-followers within our system of Strategy and Structure:

As members of the body of Christ and as part of a local church family, we now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite as Christ's disciples here at *Trinity church of Christ*. In doing so we commit ourselves to upholding the beliefs, values, strategy, and structure as outlined in the Bible.

**We agree to...**

### Protect the unity of the church...

- ...by acting in love toward other members.
- ...by refusing to gossip about anyone.
- ...by following the leader's guidance.

*"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."* ~Romans 15:5,6

*"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart"* ~1 Peter 1:22

*"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*  
~Ephesians 4:29

*"Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."* ~Hebrews 13:17

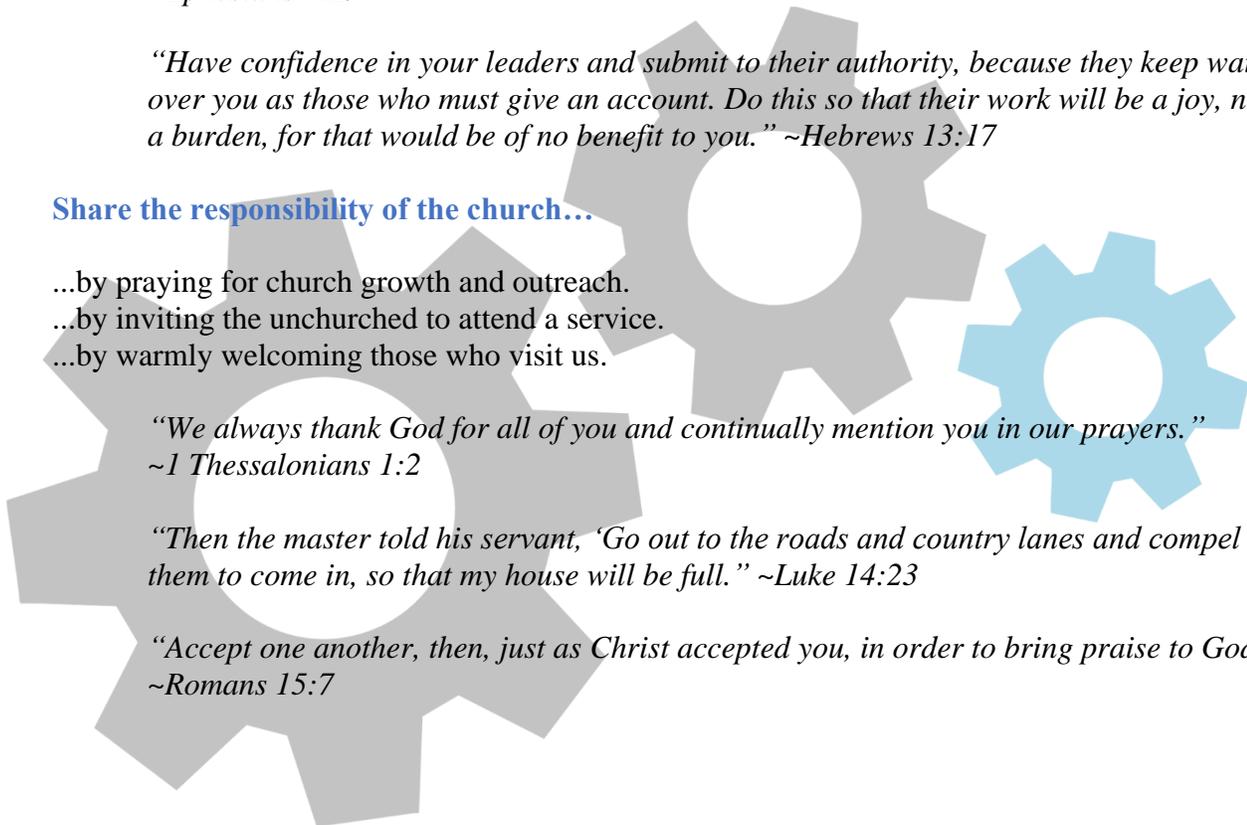
### Share the responsibility of the church...

- ...by praying for church growth and outreach.
- ...by inviting the unchurched to attend a service.
- ...by warmly welcoming those who visit us.

*"We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers."*  
~1 Thessalonians 1:2

*"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.'" ~Luke 14:23*

*"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."*  
~Romans 15:7



## Serve in the ministry of the church...

- ...by discovering and using my gifts and talents.
- ...by equipping myself to serve alongside the elders.
- ...by developing a servant's heart.

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." ~1 Peter 4:10*

*"So, Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." ~Ephesians 4:11,12*

*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others... rather, He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." ~Philippians 2:3-4,7*

## Support the testimony of the church...

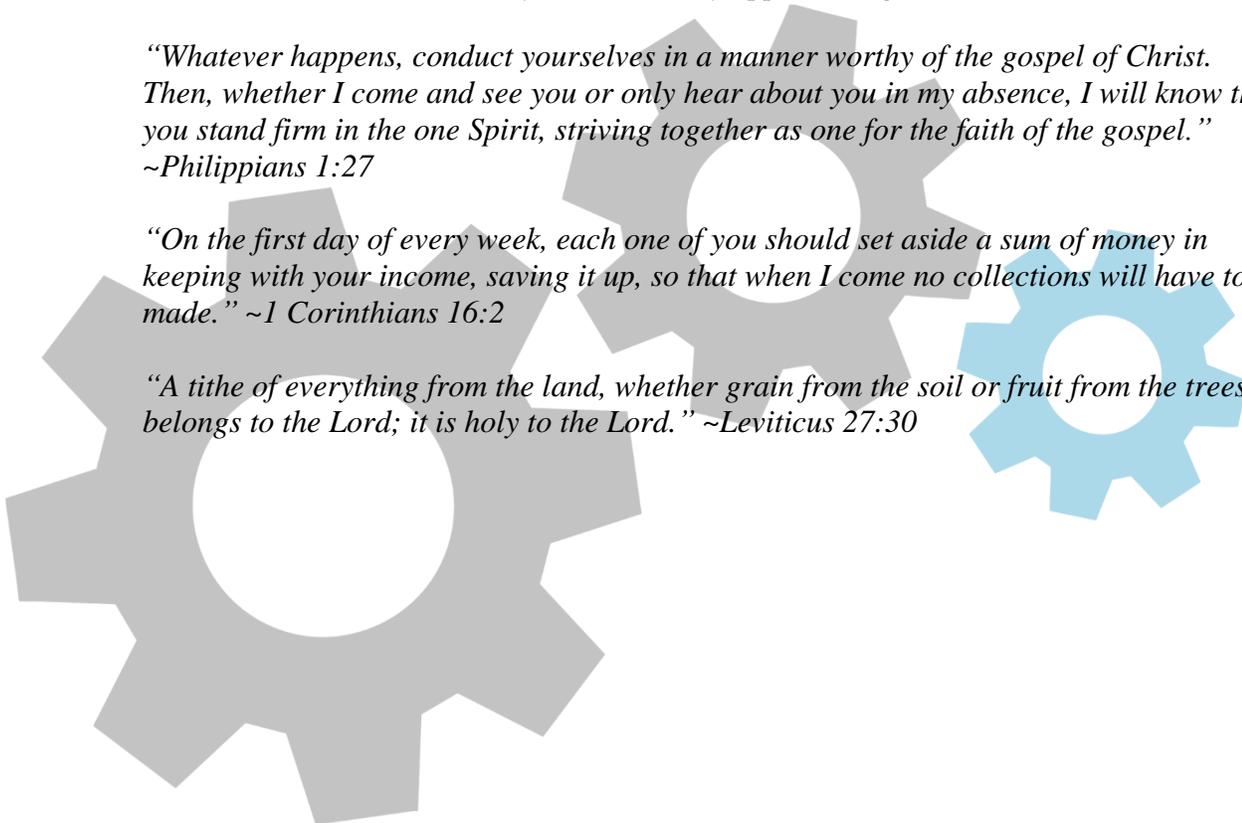
- ...by attending services/studies faithfully.
- ...by living a Godly, Spirit-led life.
- ...by giving/tithing regularly.

*"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 10:25*

*"Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel." ~Philippians 1:27*

*"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." ~1 Corinthians 16:2*

*"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord." ~Leviticus 27:30*

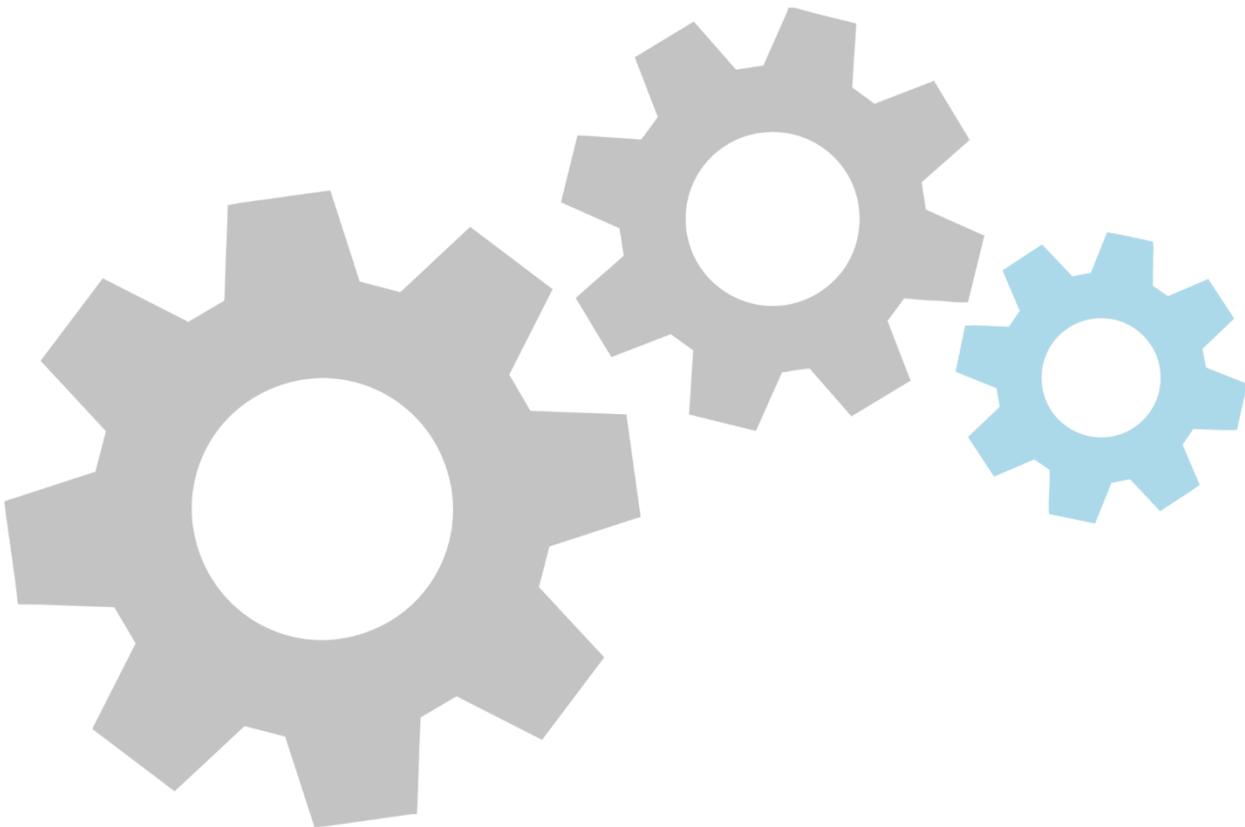


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**Table Discussion Question:**

*What gifts or talents do you think you have to use in serving the church and others?*



## Appendixes

### What About Spiritual Gifts?

Few areas of theology within the church have caused more division than the subject of spiritual gifts. Some people in our church believe that *all* the spiritual gifts spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12-14 are still being given and experienced today. Others believe that *some* of the gifts are for today. And, there are those who believe that *none* of the gifts are being given and experienced in today's church. You can see the potential problems.

There is much debate amongst individual Christians and even churches. It is important that when discussing spiritual gifts, the scriptures are the focal point...not opinions, traditions, or even personal experiences.

Remember, no matter what people believe about the gifts, whether they are given and experienced today, the SPIRIT of God does not work contrary to the WORD of God. Biblical passages usually referenced when spiritual gifts are discussed:

**1 Corinthians 12-14**

**Romans 12**

**Acts 2**

**Ephesians 4**

**Mark 16**

At *Trinity church of Christ*, it's OK to *believe* differently on this issue, but we will *act* in a loving way.

- Because this is a non-salvation area of contention between believers, we will not have a place in our church where the gift of tongues is encouraged or practiced.
- We will not allow the discussion of a non-salvation issue to destroy or distract from the Lord's work and mission to make disciples.
- We do believe that God does miracles and answers our prayers. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, God supernaturally empowers us to serve Him and do good works.

#### Tongues in Particular:

- The tongues of Acts can be understood as an actual language (Acts 2:1-12)
- Must be spoken one at a time (1 Corinthians 14:27, 33, 40)
- Must have an interpreter (1 Corinthians 14:28)
- Must have someone confirming that it's from God (1 John 4:1)
- A "prayer language" must be done in a proper place (Matthew 6:6; Romans 8:26)

- All gifts must edify the church, not the individual (1 Corinthians 14:4-5; 26)
- No one has all the gifts, some seem more esteemed than others, and tongues are only used for believers in the church (1 Corinthians 12:27-30; 13:1; 1 Corinthians 14)

