

A Community of Faith (Hebrews 13:1-9, 17)
Living by Faith pt. 6
Pastor Tim Peck

THE BIG IDEA

To live by faith, we need a community of faith where we love each other like family, opens ourselves up to new people, care for the marginalized, honor marriage, cultivate contentment, and follow spiritual leadership.

OPENING

- When you hear the word “family” used to describe church, are your initial feelings positive or negative? Why do you think this is?
- When was the last time you shared a meal with someone you didn’t know well? How did it go?

DIGGING DEEPER

- According to Pastor Tim, a church can become a community of un-faith, where living by faith is subverted instead of nurtured. This happens when people in a church stop loving each other, close themselves off from new people, ignore the marginalized, dishonor marriage, love money, and resist spiritual leadership. Why do you think these things would make it difficult for people to live by faith?
- According to Bible scholar Scot McKnight, the New Testament uses the phrase “brothers and sisters” to describe the Christian Church 271 times, making “siblings” the most commonly used word picture for the Church in the Bible.¹ McKnight says that siblings love each other in spite of their differences: “we are not identicals but differents.”² What are the implications of this for a church?
- Read Genesis 18:1-14. How did Abraham and Sarah show hospitality to these three strangers? How does v. 13 give you a clue about the identity of these strangers? What would Abraham and Sarah have missed out on had they not shown these strangers hospitality? How does Jesus build on this idea in Matthew 25:37-40?

¹Scot McKnight, *Pastor Paul: Nurturing a Culture of Christofornity in the Church* (Brazos Books, 2019), p. 61.

²McKnight, *Pastor Paul*, p. 65.

- Read Hebrews 13:5-6. How does love for money stop us from loving people? How is contentment different than love of money? What does Paul say about contentment in Philippians 4:11-13?
- Hebrews 13:17 urges Christians to trust and yield to the leadership of their pastors and elders. Why do you think this is so hard for some people? Mary Healy points out, *“For members to grumble, gripe, grouse, or resist the initiatives of their pastors not only makes life difficult for pastors but also is of no advantage to the members themselves. On the other hand, where there is mutual trust, respect, and collaboration between leaders and members, the church flourishes.”*³ How can leaders and the people they lead develop mutual trust, respect, and collaboration?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Hebrews 13:6 quotes Psalm 118: “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?” Write this prayer down and pray it each day this week. How does this impact your contentment?
- Take time to open yourself up to someone you don’t know this week. Notice what goes on inside yourself as you prepare to do this. What are you anxious about? What thoughts run through your head? Afterwards, spend time reflecting how it went.

PRAYER REQUESTS

³Mary Healy, *Hebrews* (Baker Books), p. 298.