

Membership Covenant



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Text for the Week: Exodus 18:13-27

Message for the Week: All Together

Sunday, November 5

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

What is one of the biggest disputes you ever had? What process did you engage in to resolve it? How did it work out?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Exodus 18:13-27](#) out loud.

[Clicking this link will bring you to multiple translations.]

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, take note of, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

What causes disputes between people? What is needed to resolve a dispute?

How do we/you typically resolve disputes? What are the metrics or basis we/you use to resolve disputes? How in these verses is Moses resolving disputes? Compare these two. What do you notice?

What is Jethro proposing in these verses when it comes to disputes? How would the church today benefit from this proposal?

What characteristics or qualities does Jethro say makes a person capable to lead / judge the people? What about these characteristics are so important?

Which is more important to us? Our rights? Or God's decrees and instructions? Explain why. How do our lives reflect it?

What would a group look like that puts verse Exodus 18:20 into practice? Describe it.

Try It:

When a dispute arises this week, seek first God's will for the situation.

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Pray this prayer together:

Father, help me/us to keep our eyes on you. In my/our disagreements, forgive me/us for seeking my own way. Give me/us the courage to surrender my/our rights to your kingdom glory. AMEN

Missional/Spiritual Practice: Groups

I commit to being an active participant in Covenant's faith community through corporate worship and ministry involvement. Are you an active participant in these?

I commit to being involved in a small group, prayer group, and/or a ministry group to encourage others in their spiritual life and to be held accountable for mine.

Are you involved in a ministry group? If not, which ministry group will you join?

Exodus 18:13-27

New International Version

¹³ The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"

¹⁵ Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. ¹⁶ Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions."

¹⁷ Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸ You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. ¹⁹ Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. ²⁰ Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. ²¹ But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. ²² Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. ²³ If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

²⁴ Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. ²⁵ He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. ²⁶ They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

²⁷ Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.

The Message

¹³⁻¹⁴ The next day Moses took his place to judge the people. People were standing before him all day long, from morning to night. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What's going on here? Why are you doing all this, and all by yourself, letting everybody line up before you from morning to night?"

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me with questions about God. When something comes up, they come to me. I judge between a man and his neighbor and teach them God's laws and instructions."

¹⁷⁻²³ Moses' father-in-law said, "This is no way to go about it. You'll burn out, and the people right along with you. This is way too much for you—you can't do this alone. Now listen to me. Let me tell you how to do this so that God will be in this with you. Be there for the people before God, but let the matters of concern be presented to God. Your job is to teach them the rules and instructions, to show them how to live, what to do. And then you need to keep a sharp eye out for competent men—men who fear God, men of integrity, men who are incorruptible—and appoint them as leaders over groups organized by the thousand, by the hundred, by fifty, and by ten. They'll be responsible for the everyday work of judging among the people. They'll bring the hard cases to you, but in the routine cases they'll be the judges. They will share your load and that will make it easier for you. If you handle the work this way, you'll have the strength to carry out whatever God commands you, and the people in their settings will flourish also."

²⁴⁻²⁷ Moses listened to the counsel of his father-in-law and did everything he said. Moses picked competent men from all Israel and set them as leaders over the people who were organized by the thousand, by the hundred, by fifty, and by ten. They took over the everyday work of judging among the people. They brought the hard cases to Moses, but in the routine cases they were the judges. Then Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law who went home to his own country.