

Membership Covenant



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Text for the Week: Romans 12:1-8

Message for the Week: Conformity

Sunday, January 7

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?

(Romans 12: 4,5) "For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." How important to your body is the toenail on your pinkie toe? How important are you to the body of Jesus Christ – the Church? What do you think your God-given purpose for the Church is?

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 [Romans 12:1-8](#) out loud.

[Clicking the 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:

Name some of the patterns of this world? What in our society or in your lifestyle, could be defined as a pattern of this world? In what ways have you conformed to the patterns of this world?

What does it mean to offer your body as a living sacrifice? How can we do this today?

How has the gift of grace (verse 3) been used redemptively in your life? How have you/could you use this gift in the life of the church?

Try It:

God has gifted you in a unique way, and you are in a unique setting in your home, church, and school/place of work. Now, God wants you to be a gift to others as a follower of Jesus. Try to make a difference wherever you are, as a gifted child of God through God's grace.

Prayer:

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

Father, as I/we look at this world and the power of its influence over me/us; help me/us to commit to being influenced more by YOU than by the things of this world. Renew a right heart with me/us so that my/our desire is to live for kingdom purposes rather than our own. AMEN

Missional/Spiritual Practice: Gifts

I commit to discovering, developing, and deploying the spiritual gifts God has entrusted to me for the building of the body of Christ.

I commit to using my spiritual gifts to be a witness in this world and to usher in the Kingdom of God.

Romans 12:1-8

New International Version

12 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Footnotes

- a. [Romans 12:6](#) Or *the*
- b. [Romans 12:8](#) Or *to provide for others*

The Message

12 ¹⁻² So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

³ I’m speaking to you out of deep gratitude for all that God has given me, and especially as I have responsibilities in relation to you. Living then, as every one of you does, in pure grace, it’s important that you not misinterpret yourselves as people who are bringing this goodness to God. No, God brings it all to you. The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.

⁴⁻⁶ In this way we are like the various parts of a human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole, not the other way around. The body we’re talking about is Christ’s body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. But as a chopped-off finger or cut-off toe we wouldn’t amount to much, would we? So since we find ourselves fashioned into all these excellently formed and marvelously functioning parts in Christ’s body, let’s just go ahead and be what we were made to be, without enviously or pridefully comparing ourselves with each other, or trying to be something we aren’t.

⁶⁻⁸ If you preach, just preach God’s Message, nothing else; if you help, just help, don’t take over; if you teach, stick to your teaching; if you give encouraging guidance, be careful that you don’t get bossy; if you’re put in charge, don’t manipulate; if you’re called to give aid to people in distress, keep your eyes open and be quick to respond; if you work with the disadvantaged, don’t let yourself get irritated with them or depressed by them. Keep a smile on your face.