

Growing Deeper
In This House

Week One: *We All Belong*
Romans 1:1-7

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. How can you tell when you really belong to a group? What types of behaviors give you the best indicators?
2. For some of us, actions speak louder than words. For others, there's nothing more powerful than hearing it straight from someone's mouth. Which is more powerful for you? Explain the reasoning behind your choice.
3. Read Romans 1:1-7. At the risk of burying the lede, whom does verse 6 clearly include as belonging?
4. What does it mean to you personally to know that you belong to Christ? Is this something that you have known a long time, or are you still in the process of believing this?
5. If you are still wrestling with this read John 3:16-17. Then close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Give thanks that God loves you so much, he sent his son into the world, not to condemn you, but to save you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

6. Look again at Romans 1:1-7. Note the word Paul uses to describe himself in verse 1. What does that word connote for you?
7. How do you do your best work? When you do it willingly or when you are compelled? Describe an example of each kind of task that you perform regularly.
8. The Greek word in verse 1 that is translated as servant in most modern traditions could have been used to denote a servant, who willingly serves his master or slave who is compelled to serve. Judging by the passion in Paul's work, do you think he's more of a servant of Christ or a slave? Why would that matter?
9. Paul almost seemed to boast in his status as a servant of Christ. What makes a person proud to serve another? Have you ever felt that way toward another person?
10. One answer you may have given for question 10 is a deep sense of belonging. How does a deep sense of belonging motivate us to serve?
11. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to give you a spirit to serve others.

Spend FIFTEEN - Three

12. Have you ever known a group or a family that was especially tight-knit? How did you feel about them? Were you envious?

13. Do you tend to seek out this type of group or avoid them? Explain your answer.

14. Look again at Romans 1:1-7. What did Paul say he was called to do?

15. The Jesus' twelve closest disciples Apostles were specifically known as the Apostles, a tight-knit group by all accounts. But the same word can also mean messenger. What is the importance of messengers?

16. What does it say about a group, even a tight-knit group, that employs messengers?

17. Paul states pretty emphatically in this verse that he has been called by Christ to declare to all that they are included. How does knowing that his authority comes from Jesus himself, affect your ability to take him at his word?

18. As you end your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to help you be open taking him at his word that he has a place for you in his group, you and everyone you know.

Spend FIFTEEN-Day Four

19. We talked about it briefly earlier in the week. How do you know when you belong? Specifically, how do you know deep down on an emotional level?

20. Is the feeling of belonging something that comes easily to you, or is it hard for you accept? Is this feeling something you are comfortable with?

21. Read Galatians 3:26-29. What do these verses say unite us? How does it feel to read these words?

22. What do we receive as part of the belonging in verse 29?

23. Belonging to Christ through the gift of Baptism is the ultimate acceptance. You belong to Jesus. How does this change how you feel about other types of groups?

24. Finish your FIFTEEN with a prayer of gratitude. Thank God for loving you and claiming you as his own through

Jesus.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Five

25. This may be tough to think about, but think about a time when you were excluded. How did it feel? How did it change the way you felt about including or excluding others?

26. Look again at Galatians 3:26-29. What does the author say there is no more of because of our belonging in Christ?

27. If Jesus does not see us through the lens of labels, how should this impact the way we divide and label others?

28. Again, this may be difficult to think about, but think about a time that you have excluded someone unfairly. How does it feel to think back on that time now? How do you wish you would have handled things differently?

29. If Baptism is the bedrock of our belonging in Christ, why is it unjust for us to treat fellow Christians as less than ourselves?

30. On day one this week, we looked at a very well-know verse of the bible. Look again at John 3:16-17. If God wants everyone to be a part of his family, it fair for us to treat those who don't yet find their identity in Christ as less than ourselves? Why or why not?

31. As you finish your final FIFTEEN this week, consider all that it means to be a part of God's family through the gift of Baptism. If you have been Baptized, end by giving thanks for being included in God's family. If you have not yet been Baptized, ask God to give you the courage to take a step toward that goal. Then go to Pathfinderstl.org/baptism to find information on how to be Baptized at Pathfinder Church.

Week Two: *We All Pitch In*
Romans 12:3-10

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. What chores and responsibilities did you have as a child? How did you feel about them? If you did not have any, how did that make you feel?
2. One commentary calls Romans chapters 12-16 “Guidelines for living as redeemed people in a fallen world”. These chapters could be considered a code of conduct or better yet, characteristics of people saved by God’s grace. Read Romans 12:3-10. What is Paul asking Christ-followers to do?
3. Paul includes a right attitude and right actions. Let’s start with attitude. What attitudes can characterize people who love Jesus according to these verses?
4. What makes it hard to see yourself accurately (v. 3)?
5. What makes it hard to be devoted to one another (v. 10)?
6. Read Romans 12:3 in the Message version. It ends: “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.” How does this truth help you see yourself accurately and enable you to be devoted to fellow Christ-followers (especially those you disagree with)?
7. End your FIFTEEN considering what God is and what He has done for you. Ask Him to give you a right attitude about yourself and a sincere love for fellow Christians.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

8. What do you find fascinating about the human body?
9. Yesterday we considered a right attitude of gratitude, humility and sincere love. Today let’s look at the actions encouraged in these verses. Read Romans 12:3-10. How would you summarize what Christ-followers are to do?
10. How is the human body a good illustration of God’s intention for His people?
11. Paul uses the human body to picture God’s redeemed people. This group is also called the church. How well does your church fit the human body illustration?

12. What part do you play in the healthy functioning of your church?

13. What personal or cultural barriers get in the way of being an active contributor? What barriers are there for you personally?

14. The Message translation of verses 4-6 includes this line: "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." Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to show you your meaning in terms of your church. Ask Him to reveal and remove any barriers preventing your healthy participation.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

15. Have you ever done something out of obligation? How did that impact your performance? Your satisfaction?

16. Paul challenges God's people saved by grace to be devoted to one another, supporting one another by using their gifts. 12:5 says we belong to each other. Read 12:3-11. What words does Paul use to describe the way God's people are to use their gifts?

17. Think about the words you listed in question 16. How are you challenged by these descriptions of serving your church?

18. Read 12:6-8 in the Message. What attitude(s) come(s) through in this translation?

19. God communicates over and over that He wants our whole heart. He wants a real relationship with you. Obligation does not draw us to Him. End your FIFTEEN in prayer and introspection. Ask God to point out half-heartedness or obligation in using your gifts. Ask Him to renew and deepen your love for Him and His people.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

20. Would you say to think too highly of yourself or too little?

21. How are both of these in conflict with God's perspective?

22. Read 12:3-10 again. What does God imply about your value and capability in these verses?

23. Have you ever been envious of another's giftedness? What made you feel that way?

24. Look at verses 6-8. Imagine the kinds of people who would have each gift. For example, Teachers are clear thinkers, encouragers know how to motivate others, leaders are good organizers and managers. Could one person realistically embody all the gifts? Why not?

25. Your gifts were never intended to do all the work of the church alone. Your strengths balance another's weaknesses. Others make up for your deficiencies. Every person is needed or the work is incomplete. End your FIFTEEN in thanksgiving to God. Thank Him for your giftedness. Thank Him for people whose gifts are completely different from yours.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

26. How are you currently contributing to your local church and to the church at large? What do you feel like God has called you to do?

27. Read Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:11-12. Which of these gifts do you feel like you might have? Note that some of the gifts are more public while others are behind the scenes.

28. Have you ever taken a spiritual gifts inventory? What were the results?

29. Do you think a person's giftedness can change? Why? How?

30. Who could you talk to about your giftedness? Consider having table conversation with your family. Discuss the giftedness of each family member. Talk about how each of you could use your gifts in the church.

31. Close your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you identify and use your gifts to make a difference in the lives of those in your church and all around you.

Week Three: *We Keep Taking Steps*
Philippians 3:12-17

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. As we dig deeper into what it means to live a God-directed journey, let's read through Philippians 3:12-17. What is the goal for which we strive to remain focused?
2. When Paul urges us to, "press on toward the goal." What area in your life are you encountering resistance as you remain focused on Christ?
3. Provide an example in your life where you have found strength in being united with people of similar likes, beliefs, experiences.
4. Here at Pathfinder, we have established a simple saying that can help you remain focused on your goal. The saying is, ONE, ONE, FIFTEEN, SIX. Today, we will focus more on the first ONE. Giving one day a week to the worship of God and rest. According to Hebrews 10:23-25, what is the benefit of worshipping together?
5. God rested on the Sabbath. When He took a break from His creative process to enjoy what He had created. What way have you found this week to rest in God creation and just find enjoyment from what he has created?
6. Reflect on the statement and try to explain what it means to you, "God is happiest when He sees His children at play."
7. As you finish your FIFTEEN, pray for ways that you can draw encouragement from others. Also, do not forget to ask God to open your eyes to people whom you can encourage today.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Yesterday we closed with a prayer to God to open your eyes to see who you could encourage. In what way did God come to you in that prayer?
9. Yesterday we focused on ways that we could receive encouragement with the first ONE. The second ONE focuses on way that we could give encouragement by being some ONE to somebody. Read the words of Jesus in John 13:34-35 and his words in Matthew 5:13-16. What similarities do these two verses share?
10. Describe a time when someone was intentional in their encouragement towards you and how that made you feel.

11. For a mental exercise, take this space to write down as many ways that come to mind about how you could be intentional in your encouragement this week. (an un-asked for soft drink, a spontaneous prayer, be creative!)
12. Now take this space to identify at least 3 people which you plan to be intentional with this week.
13. Going back to our Bible verses for the day, what is the motive for our love, care, encouragement, etc.?
14. Now read 1 John 2:7-11. How does our light shine brightest?
15. As you end your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray that God grants you a heart akin to His heart and eyes to see as He does. May He grant this to us all by the power of His Spirit.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Three

16. Today we will focus on the benefit of the FIFTEEN. Spending at least fifteen minutes a day in a faith building exercise. Please read John 15:5-8. What is the benefit and goal to remaining closely tied to Jesus?
17. In your life, recall some things that have become habit forming, good or bad. Describe the process, (actions, feelings, thoughts) of when those things became habit forming.
18. Read Mark 1:35. Why did Jesus, the Son of God, consider this time a priority?
19. Why is solitude so important to forging a closeness with God?
20. Read Psalm 46:10. Describe stillness. Why is it crucial to knowing God?
21. One of the benefits of a God-directed journey is that it is very, very personal. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask God to help forge regular time for solitude and stillness to hear what he has to say to you.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Four

22. This week we have reviewed the ONE, ONE, FIFTEEN, goal for our journey with God. Today we will focus on the SIX or what it means to benefit others and yourself through acts of service. Let's go back to Matthew 5:13-16. What does it mean to be both salt and light?
23. What important step is needed from us for the world to experience salt and light?

24. Read Philippians 2:3-8. What key mind-set is Paul urging us to have in order to serve like Christ?
25. Describe a time in your life when it was to your benefit to be humble.
26. Do you think that Jesus was born with a servant's heart, or did he develop it?
27. Power, position, acclaim are not bad things in and of themselves. What does Jesus teach us to value over all these things?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you see people who need Him. Ask Him to help you love the people dear to His heart and exploring ways to serve them. May God grant us the courage to act.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Five

29. Describe a process that you have been part of over a long period of time where growth was incremental, however, the results were obvious when comparing the before and after.
30. Think about a time in your relationship with God where it has been strong. What was the mindset and action that accompanied that relationship?
31. We started our week with the reason for which we keep on pressing toward the goal. In Philippians 3:14, Paul calls it a "prize." What do you consider to be "the prize?"
32. Read Psalm 16:11.
33. Read this quote from an article in gotquestions.com. "...rewards in heaven glorify God and provide us with joy, peace, and wonder as we consider God's work in us and through us. The closer we were to God during this life, the more centered on Him and aware of Him, the more dependent on Him, the more desperate for His mercy, the more there will be to celebrate. We are like characters in a story who suffer doubt, loss, and fear, wondering if we will ever really have our heart's desire. When the happy ending comes and desire is fulfilled, there comes a completion. The story would not be satisfying without that completion. Rewards in heaven are the completion of our earthly story, and those rewards will be eternally satisfying."
(<https://www.gotquestions.org/rewards-in-heaven.html>)
34. As you finish your final FIFTEEN this week, consider all that it means to be on a God-directed journey. Remember that even when we are faithless, He remains faithful. In our journey we will have setbacks, struggles, and even occasional doubts. Continue to ask yourself to be mindful of the mission that God has called you to. Also, that God would always put before you His eternal purpose.