

## **New in Membership – Renewed in Christ**

*“I am the vine; you are the branches.  
If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit;  
apart from me you can do nothing.”*

**John 15:5**

This Bible study was written by Sally Valleskey, a member of Abiding Word Lutheran Church in Houston, TX. It was reviewed by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Professor-emeritus Armin Panning.

*References from “Training Christians for Ministry” (TCM), Paul E. Kelm, © 1993 by Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI.*

# New in Membership – Renewed in Christ

## Getting Started

What are the benefits of having a mission statement?

- Helps create an identity
- Helps to create unity
- Provides vision
- Gives clarity of purpose

## **[Your Congregation's] Mission Statement:**

Mission statement here.

## Getting Into the Word

**John 15:5:** <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

**Ephesians 2:8-10:** <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**James 2:17:** <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

**2 Peter 3:18:** <sup>18</sup> *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.*

**John 3:30:** <sup>30</sup> *He must become greater; I must become less.*

**1 Corinthians 12:4-11:** <sup>4</sup> *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit.* <sup>5</sup> *There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.* <sup>6</sup> *There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.* <sup>7</sup> *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good* <sup>11</sup> *All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*

**1 Corinthians 12:12:** <sup>12</sup> *The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.*

**1 Corinthians 12:24b:** <sup>24b</sup> *...But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it,*

**1 Corinthians 12:27-28:** <sup>27</sup> *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.* <sup>28</sup> *And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.*

**1 Corinthians 14:12:** <sup>12</sup> *So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.*

**Romans 12:1-13:** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.* <sup>2</sup> *Do not conform any longer 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.* <sup>3</sup> *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 measure of faith God has given you.* <sup>4</sup> *Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,* <sup>5</sup> *so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.* <sup>6</sup> *We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.* <sup>7</sup> *If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.* <sup>9</sup> *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.* <sup>10</sup> *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.* <sup>11</sup> *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.* <sup>12</sup> *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.* <sup>13</sup> *Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

**1 Peter 4:8-11:** <sup>8</sup> *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.* <sup>9</sup> *Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.* <sup>10</sup> *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.* <sup>11</sup> *If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

1. Which of those words underlined speaks most to you at this time?

Each one is gifted

In the measure/grace given

By God himself—the same Spirit

All are different

As he determines

Each is a part of all the others (we belong)

By his strength

For the common good / build up the church

Do this cheerfully, faithfully, generously, lovingly

2. Where do you place yourself with the use of spiritual gifts (TCM, page 268)?

- I pretty well know my spiritual gifts, have developed and am using them.
- I pretty well know my gifts but need to develop and employ them better.
- I'm just beginning to understand my spiritual gifts and how to use them.
- I'm pretty much unaware of the subject of spiritual gifts and would like to learn more.

3. When you look at the church, what challenges and opportunities is it facing today (TCM, page 268)?

4. What gifts do you think the church needs to carry out its mission (TCM, page 268)?

5. What is the proper motivation in the use of spiritual gifts? What is the difference between motivating by the law, and motivating by the gospel? (see Scripture above – John 15:5, Ephesians 2:8-10, find others as well)

6. How can the LORD use me here at (your church)?
  
7. What are my interests, experiences? What is my personal goal/mission as a part of the congregation?
  
8. How can we best support each other in using our gifts? (What help do I need? What help do others need?)
  
9. Is there anything hindering me at this time? How can I remove that barrier?

## Prayer

**Hebrews 13:20-21:** <sup>20</sup> *May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,* <sup>21</sup> *equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*