

WHAT'S YOUR PURPOSE?

WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU HERE FOR?

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

I Am Called To Belong To God's Church

ICEBREAKER

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be and why?

INTRODUCTION

No matter where you go, you are still you! You can change your location, but you can't change your identity. Last week we learned that the first purpose of your life is to receive God's love and love Him back. This week, we found out that **the second purpose of your life is that God called you to belong to His family.** The moment I was saved, I was adopted into God's family. This has been His plan from the very beginning of time. If God hadn't wanted a family, you wouldn't exist. Let's dive deeper into the pictures that the Bible gives us that tells us we belong to God and His family.

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The family of God is called the church. God's second purpose for our lives is to be in God's family! We are all called to be a part of God's church. And the Bible gives us several pictures of what that looks like. Let's take a look at why God wants you to be a part of His church.

The first picture of the church is a FAMILY.

*You ... are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. **You are members of God's family.***

Ephesians 2:19 (NLT)

1. In God's FAMILY I DISCOVER MY CALLING.

God called you to be a part of His family, the church. You are a member of His family. This is why it's so important to be connected to His family in a world that is becoming very disconnected from His church.

How has being a member of God's family (the church) helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus and other believers?

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The next picture of the church is a TEMPLE.

We are carefully joined together in Him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.

Ephesians 2:21 (NLT)

2. In God's TEMPLE I'M SUPPORTED BY OTHERS.

The only way the parts of a building can support itself is if it is connected with each other. If you take the frame, walls, and ceiling of a house and just lay them on each other, it will fall over. But as you put them together, they hold each other up.

Name one way that God's Temple, the church has supported you. (Example, being part of a small group community, attending church helped, someone praying for you,)

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The next picture of God's church is a BODY.

The term “Christ’s body” is used in a lot of places to describe the church. Here’s what it means.

3. IN CHRIST’S BODY, I DISCOVER MY FUNCTION IN GOD’S FAMILY.

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.
Romans 12:4-5 (NLT)

Your body is made up of different parts, each part has a different function, and they all belong to each other as your body. It’s the same with your church. You belong. You have a special function to play. When you are a part of God's church, you discover where you function best in His family.

Have you learned your special function and unique value as a part of Christ’s body yet? The best way to discover where God wants you to serve in His family is to jump in and start serving. He will gladly guide you into where you function best in His Body.

Please review the various ministries at New Hope below. If you were to volunteer in a ministry, which of these would you experiment in? Please share with your group.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administration / Scheduling (RM)• Attendance Counters• Camera Operator• Communion Team• Creative Media (RM)• Finance (FPU)• Greeters• Guest Services• Hospitality (Refreshments)• Halau• Kid Zone• Levites (Set up/Take down)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Misc. Projects (In person or Online)• Office Cleaners• Office Helpers• Online Chat Hosts (RM)• Prayer Team• Prison Ministry• Security (KZ)• Servant Central• Small Group Book Distribution• Small Group Hosts• Small Group Resource Team (RM)• Social Media (RM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special Events• Stagehands• Tech Team (Lighting/ Sound/Production)• Ushers• Worship Team• Youth Ministry (Jr. High / High School)• Wherever the greatest need <p>Volunteer Phone: 808-261-5975 Email: info@nhww.org</p> <p>RM = Remote Ministry</p>
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The next picture of God's church is a FLOCK.

In John 10, Jesus calls us His sheep and Himself the Good Shepherd.

4. In God's FLOCK I'M PROTECTED AND CARED FOR.

I know that God is protecting me because I'm in His flock. I'm not on my own. I have other people looking out for me. I enjoy safety and security because I've got a Shepherd. And that makes me less anxious and less fearful. And that makes me more confident.

During the pandemic, millions of Christians have stopped going to church. They've left the flock and are unprotected.

What are some ways being connected to God's flock has provided you some support and care? (Example, attending church on Sundays, worshipping and hearing God's word has encouraged me. Or, my small group or ministry I serve in has provided some encouragement and support.)

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The next picture of God's church is a GARDEN.

Lastly, the church is a GARDEN. Jesus said, *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener"* (John 15:1, NIV).

5. In God's garden my life becomes productive.

If you were to cut off a branch from a fruit tree or a vine, it could not produce any fruit. In fact, it would be dead. It may stay green for a while, but over time it would grow brittle. It's the same with us. When we stay connected to God's garden, His church, we are growing and productive.

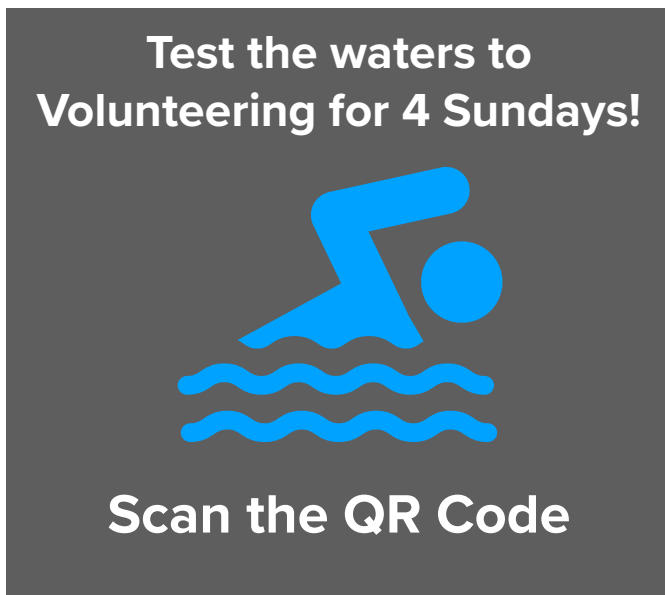
How has being in God's Garden, His church help you to bear more fruit in your life?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, during your quiet time, think about each of these pictures of the church and what they mean to you:

1. In God's **FAMILY** I DISCOVER MY CALLING.
2. In God's **TEMPLE** I'M SUPPORTED BY OTHERS.
3. In Christ's **BODY** I DISCOVER MY FUNCTION IN GOD'S FAMILY.
4. In God's **FLOCK** I'M PROTECTED AND CARED FOR.
5. In God's **GARDEN** MY LIFE BECOMES PRODUCTIVE.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS:



CLOSE IN PRAYER

Father God, thank You for making a way for us to be a part of Your family. We belong! And because of that, You have planned so many great things for us. Please help us to stay connected to your church. Help us fight the temptation to disconnect from your family. No matter what gets our attention in the world, we will find our identity in You and in Your family. In Jesus' name, amen.



Find Time to READ God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

S - Scripture
O - Observation
A - Application
P - Prayer

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

You're no longer strangers or outsiders. You belong here, with as much right to the name Christian as anyone. God is building a home. He's using us all—irrespective of how we got here—in what He is building.

--Ephesians 2:19-20 (MSG)

Day 2:

For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them.

--Matthew 18:20 (ESV)

Day 3:

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

--1 Corinthians 3:16 (NIV)

Day 4:

They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

--Acts 2:46-47 (NLT)

Day 5:

We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church.

--Ephesians 4:15 (NLT)