

HHBC Value Statements – Week 5

Cherishing the Local Church

With one more week to go in our church wide study on the renewed values of our church, week 5 is centered on the value the church puts on cherishing the local church.

Henderson Hills defines cherishing the local church in this way: ***We value the essential role of the church in the sanctification of the believer and the salvation of the nations.***

I. Description: Our church believes this value is best displayed in seven distinct ways:

Engaging members for a deeper level of participation and growth
Devoting ourselves to meaningful membership
Cultivating supportive relationships among members
Maintaining unity of the body
Identifying and practicing spiritual gifts
Partnering and ministering with other doctrinally sound churches
Maintaining the biblical purity of the local church

II. Introductory Questions:

As we dive into what it means to apply the value of cherishing the local church, let's frame out our discussion first with a couple of questions:

First, how would your life be different without the church? What would be the biggest difference to your life, and what would you miss the most?

And second, do you think many of us often take the church for granted? Why or why not?

The local church is a thing to be cherished and valued, and as we walk through these ways to do that, let's focus our hearts on what God's Word says about the body of Christ.

III. Discussion and Application:

1. Engaging members for a deeper level of participation and growth (READ • 1 Thessalonians 1:2-8)

Our church does not want to rest on its past successes; rather, we yearn to fully engage our members and challenge them to passionately partake in the ministries of the church and be an example to all churches in their participation and growth.

In reading this opening encouragement from Paul to the church at Thessalonica, what do we learn about the church, and how would you describe it from what Paul says about it?

If you were to read a letter like this about our church, how would you react, and how would it further impact your willingness to participate in the church? And how does reading these words about this ancient church challenge you today?

2. Devoting ourselves to meaningful membership (READ • Acts 2:42-47)

Henderson Hills believes that its members are called to live out their faith in a way that displays their willingness to actively serve the body and its ministries and be completely dedicated disciples of Christ.

In reading this story from Acts, what principles and ideals can we apply to how we live and serve within this body of believers?

If we looked around and saw other people within our church exist in the same ways the early church did in this snapshot, how might that change and motivate the overall membership of Henderson Hills?

3. Cultivating supportive relationships among members (READ • Romans 12:3-10)

As a diverse body of believers saved by grace, we are called to be people that support one another, love one another, respect one another, and show one another honor. By these actions we celebrate God's sanctifying work and cherish one another.

In this passage Paul states, "in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function".

As we know that this statement is absolutely true, why should this be something we celebrate often and consistently?

And Paul says later that we ought to "outdo one another in showing honor".

How can we better honor one another's work and support other's ministry? How would our church change if we did this?

4. Maintaining unity of the body (READ • Ephesians 4:1-6)

Our unity as a church is paramount to our success and God's use of us both here and around the world. We must focus our hearts on being unified in every area of the church and seek to maintain that unity in all that we do.

Why is it important that we are called to "maintain the unity of the Spirit" but not called to create the unity? In simpler terms, why is it important that the Holy Spirit creates unity, and we are called to only maintain it?

According to Paul, what role does our personal walk with Christ play in maintaining this unity? Why is it important to remember that no one within the body is exempt from that?

5. Identifying and practicing spiritual gifts (READ • 1 Corinthians 12:14-19)

To be effective in both our ministry and our service to others, each member must understand the importance of identifying their spiritual gift and practicing it for the benefit of the body.

Why is it a wonderful thing that God gives each believer a spiritual gift and then provides through the local church a way to use it for His glory? Why should we celebrate this truth?

In light of the passage, why should we never look down upon someone for how God has gifted them or become prideful in how God has gifted us? How does understanding the importance of every member build up the church?

6. Partnering and ministering with other doctrinally sound churches (READ • Philippians 4:14-20)

Henderson Hills does not have an exclusive claim to the gospel, and praise God for that. We partner and minister with other churches to support them, to encourage them in their ministry, and to learn from them – praise God for that!

As it entered into a partnership with Paul, how did the church at Philippi impact Paul unlike any other church? What lesson can we learn from their example?

What does it say about the church at Philippi that they were willing to partner with Paul in taking the gospel to the nations?

7. Maintaining the biblical purity of the local church (READ • Matthew 18:15-20)

God has called His church to be a pure and undefiled bride, and as we love, support, and cherish the church more passionately each day, we ought to protect the body and do all we can to maintain its purity.

The passage is Jesus' instructions to believers when another in the body has publically sinned, and the process of church discipline is a patient and ultimately uplifting one for the purpose of purity in the church.

In reading the passage and thinking on what maintaining the purity of the church looks like, why should the Holy Spirit play a guiding role in both this process and the overall protection of the church?

And because the process of church discipline is biblical, we ought to partake in it...but why do this process and the constant maintenance of biblical purity in the church both need to have a foundation of God's grace to be successful?