



WORKSHEETS

Dig deeper into what it might look like
for you to practically love your church

Based on *Love Your Church* by Tony Merida

ONE: BELONGING

God has given us a need for community—and he has given us the place where that need for community is met: the church. The church functions as the family of God. We're brothers and sisters in Christ. Christians of the previous generations pass on their faith, stories, and traditions, which we build on. As you consider both the legacy of your church family and what your church family looks like today, it helps to trace a sort of "family tree." Use these prompts to gain an understanding of your church family's DNA.

How did your church get started?

What has changed significantly in the history of your church?

Who leads the church now?

Who's been in your church a long time and has stories you'd like to hear?

Who are you regularly connecting with in your church family?

TWO: WELCOMING

Prejudice and discrimination are ongoing human problems and talking about them (especially with regard to the church) often makes us very uncomfortable. But God's word addresses this issue in many ways and in many places, so God's people need to think about it. Consider what it means to experience prejudice, or simply to struggle with being welcomed or feeling like an outsider. Use this reflection to think of practical ways you can be welcoming.

1) List some things that have made you feel like an outsider before (at church or elsewhere).

2) How can you intentionally greet and welcome others so they are not 'on the outside' or 'at the fringes' of your church?

3) What sorts of people may feel particularly like outsiders at your church? (Think of what the culture at your church is like and who might not fit in as easily.) How can you be intentional in reaching out to them and not just to those who could plug in seamlessly?

THREE: GATHERING

The church is more than a building you visit and more than an event you attend. However, this doesn't mean that gathering together for corporate worship is unimportant. What we do in our corporate gatherings is important for our growth in godliness, and it's an important way in which we commend the gospel to unbelievers. Gathering regularly takes effort, though. How might we set ourselves up to overcome the challenges? What are the biggest obstacles for you?

WE'RE CHALLENGED BY...

- 1) Distractions
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

WE COULD OVERCOME THIS BY...

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

HOW WILL YOU "MAKE SUNDAYS SWEET"?

Choose two of these ideas, or come up with a new one. Write them below and think through practical ways you can apply them.

- Recognize that you need your church and your church needs you.
- Sanctify Saturday nights.
- Prepare for drama at home on Sunday morning!
- Have some special traditions on the day of corporate worship.

1)

2)

FOUR: CARING

The “one another” passages in the New Testament demonstrate the importance of caring for our brothers and sisters in our Christian community. That there are so many of these passages illustrates that this is a non-negotiable for brothers and sisters. We don’t have to look far to see there is also plenty of need.

Can you think of a time someone’s care for you helped you significantly, even if it was a small thing?

COMMON OPPORTUNITIES TO SHOW CARE

Brainstorm some practical ways you could show care to people in these common situations, so you’re ready when the need arises.



New baby in the family



Death of a loved one



Separation, divorce, broken relationship



Facing long-term illness



Recent foster care placement or adoption



Single parents or kids without a present parent

FIVE: SERVING

Followers of Christ are not spectators in the church, but servants in the church. As a Christian, you shouldn't think of your church as "the place where I listen to sermons" but as "the place where I serve." Use your gifts passionately for the good of the body. You need to be in a local church to be strengthened by the gifts of others, and you need to be in a local church because others need to be built up by your gifts! So how might you serve?

YOUR GIFTS

What are you good at? What are your spiritual gifts? What do you have experience doing?

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

What formal ministries or programs line up with your gifts? Are there informal opportunities too?

SIX: HONORING

In a church which is blessed by having faithful pastors who are attempting to serve under Christ in a way that honors him and builds up the body, there are many helpful ways to respond to their leadership biblically as well as to encourage them. Brainstorm those ideas below, keeping in mind that every leader is an individual with their own unique gifts, needs, strengths, weaknesses, and walk with God.

**When you think of church,
who do you think of?**

Leaders include pastors, elders, deacons,
Bible study teachers, those who
coordinate kids' church programs,
and so many others.






**How could you honor
and encourage them?**

See pages 113-118 of Love Your Church
for helpful ideas. Don't forget to factor
in the unique personality of each
individual you've listed.

SEVEN: WITNESSING

Often, evangelistic methods involve only “on the spot” presentations, and they can be impersonal. They can simply allow us to check a box to appease our guilt, and then move on. But when you’re reaching out to people you see regularly, it requires faithfulness and perseverance. You need to do the necessary pre-evangelism, answer questions, slowly and gradually watch defenses go down, and hopefully—by God’s grace—see your friend, family member, co-worker, or neighbor declare, “Jesus is Lord.” Here are five real life-ways to engage with unbelievers in your network.

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray • Invite • Give books and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve • Share the gospel |
|--|---|

Who	What
List specific names or abbreviations for people that come to mind.	Pick one of the five ideas above for each person.
 Familial	
 Geographical	
 Vocational	
 Recreational	
 Commercial	

Brainstorm a specific action you might take to ensure you follow through on witnessing to each person. If you’re in a group, it may be helpful to discuss ideas. For example, if you said, “give a resource,” ask others what book they’d recommend giving to someone who believes _____ or has _____ barriers to the gospel.

EIGHT: SENDING

If a church isn't sending, it's ending. This may sound counter-intuitive, but usually churches that are raising up and sending out missionaries and church planters are vibrant churches. How can you support those your church is sending?



Who will you support? Browse a list of your church missionaries and select someone to intentionally support.



Consider where they are serving. What's it like? What do they do?



What needs might they have as they serve? What challenges might they be facing?



How will you reach out to support them? Ideas: Write a letter, make a donation, give them a call, pray for them regularly, or send a gift or a care package.