

{ STEP THREE }

Encouragement



FOOTPRINT – *We need to surround ourselves with people who can keep us focused and directed*

Atta boys. Everybody loves them. Everybody needs them. There's nothing more motivational for us to continue to pursue a goal than to have someone encourage us. It doesn't matter what form it takes, either. It can be a slap on the back, a fist bump, a word of encouragement or praise or even just a smile. When someone acknowledges us and the work we are doing, it goes a long way toward us pressing on.

You're gonna need a regular dose of this as you pursue a relationship with Jesus. The main reason is because pursuing Jesus goes against culture so much that you're going to feel like you're the only person on earth who's doing it. This is why being involved in a church and finding some Christian friends is so vital to your success as a Christ-follower. You need people who will keep you focused and grounded. This is why God designed the Church in the first place. Nobody knew this to be true more than Paul.

Paul, who happened to write quite a bit of the New Testament, was dramatically saved through an encounter with Jesus Himself on a trip to persecute Christians. He hated Christians, but Jesus called him out of that and into a redirected life of purpose. But, because of his reputation with other Christians, he didn't have many people to help him.

He did, however, find a friend in a guy named Barnabas, who convinced other believers to give him a chance. This friend-in-his-corner helped Paul surround himself with other Christians who helped him grow in his relationship with God. This had such an impact on Paul, that he spent the rest of his life building little communities of believers all over area. He realized how important it was to have a community of believers around him and he spent the rest of his life helping others find and engage in these same communities.

What about you? Who's in your community? Where is the church that you will call home? You're going to need it on those days when following Jesus gets really hard. It's not enough to have a Christian friend. **YOU NEED COMMUNITY**. You need a place that you can be around different generations of Christians, different cultures of Christians, and different personalities of Christians. This only happens in a local body of believers. The added benefit of the local church is the opportunity to serve; another quality of a true Christ follower.

Don't waste any time. Get plugged in to a local church and surround yourself with other Christians in an active relationship following Jesus

Key Questions

What has been your experiences with churches that you've attended? How might that be different now that you are a Christ-follower?

Who in your circle of friends attends church? Would their church be open for you to get plugged into? Why or why not?

What types of things do you need the most right now in your new faith that the church can provide?



Here's a Tweetable statement worth sending out:

If Jesus found a need to surround Himself with others, how much more do we need a church to surround us. #SOGA_FCA_THESTEP

Daily Reading Plan

- Hebrews 10:23-25 – The **RESPONSIBILITY** of meeting together
- Acts 9:26-27 – The **MERCY** when we meet together
- John 17:22-24 – The **MESSAGE** of meeting together
- Psalm 122:1 – The **JOY** of meeting together
- Eph. 1:22-23 – The **UNITY** in our meeting together