

**Cultivating Covenant Community**  
A Study of the One-Another Commands of Scripture

**Lesson 1: The Communion of the Saints**

**1. The church is essential.**

- a. Matthew 16:13-20
- b. Why do people struggle with seeing the church as essential?
  - i. Individualism
  - ii. Consumerism
  - iii. Personal Hurt

**2. The church is a covenant community.**

- a. God began forming a covenant people in the Old Testament.
  - i. Genesis 17:1-8
  - ii. Exodus 2:23-25; 19:4-6
  - iii. Leviticus 26:12
  - iv. Deuteronomy 29:10-15
- b. The New Testament church is a continuation of this same people of God.
  - i. 1 Peter 2:9-10
  - ii. Ephesians 2:11-13
  - iii. Romans 11:17-24
  - iv. Revelation 21:1-4
- c. The covenantal structure of the church is still familial and intergenerational.
  - i. Acts 2:38-39
  - ii. Lydia and the Philippian Jailer in Acts 16
  - iii. 1 Corinthians 7:14
  - iv. Psalm 103:17-18
  - v. Psalm 78:1-8
- d. Palmer Robertson: “In its most essential aspect, a covenant is that which binds people together. Nothing lies closer to the heart of the biblical concept of the covenant than the imagery of bond inviolable.”
- e. S.G. DeGraff: “In the covenant God always draws near to His people as a whole—never just to individuals. Because of the covenant, the entire people rest secure in God’s faithfulness, and every individual member of the covenant shares in that rest as a member of the community.”

**3. The church is a communion of the saints.**

- a. Apostles Creed: “I believe...in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints...”
- b. Westminster Confession of Faith 26:1-2:
  - i. All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory; and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other’s gifts and graces, and are obliged to the

performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

- ii. Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities. Which communion, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended unto all those who, in every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

**c. Five Observations Based on WCF 26:1-2**

**i. Christians are united to Christ and to one another in love.**

- 1. 1 John 1:3
- 2. Ephesians 3:14-19
- 3. Ephesians 4:15-16

**ii. Our communion with other Christians involves a sharing in one another's gifts and graces.**

- 1. 1 Corinthians 12:7, 12-13
- 2. 1 Corinthians 3:21-23

**iii. Our communion with other Christians involves our duty to care for one another spiritually and physically.**

- 1. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14
- 2. Romans 1:11-12
- 3. Romans 15:26-27
- 4. 1 John 3:16-18
- 5. Galatians 6:10
- 6. Acts 4:32
- 7. Colossians 2:2-3

**iv. Our communion with other Christians includes worship and other spiritual activities.**

- 1. Hebrews 10:24-25
- 2. Acts 2:42, 46

**v. Our communion with other Christians is not sectarian but includes all those who call on the Lord Jesus.**

- 1. Ephesians 4:4-6
- 2. 1 Corinthians 1:2