

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

You belong.

SCRIPTURE

Romans 12:1-21, 1 Corinthians 12:25-26

KEEP IN MIND

1. As you read through these passages, you may notice a few of the following in Romans 12. Belonging to one another is an act of worship. It also means we ought not to think too highly of ourselves. We all will play different roles in the body of Christ, and we have to work together to represent Jesus to the world. One person is not more important than the other, and those in leadership must see their job as one to equip the body to do the work of Jesus. There is a strong call to be genuine, to be patient in suffering with one another. Showing hospitality to strangers is here too. It also means being patient and blessing those who are persecuting you. The Christian life isn't about just getting all of our individual needs met but also taking care of everybody in the community no matter how challenging they may be. If the church is to model the person of Jesus, then that also means showing grace to those outside of our community of faith in the hopes they might come to put faith in Jesus.
2. Joseph Meyers, in his book, *"The Search to Belong,"* talks about four spaces where we belong to one another. He calls these four spaces: public, social, personal, and intimate. As we think about belonging, we have to value all four types and not expect every relationship in the church or our small group to fit into every level of belonging. Knowing about these four spaces of belonging will help us value each space and have realistic expectations of others.
 - a. Public belonging is where we connect with others at a concert or a Chicago Cubs baseball game. Even though you might not know the person sitting in front of you, you still might high five them when the Cubs beat the White Sox. You might think of a worship service on a Sunday morning.
 - b. Social spaces are where we share little "snap-shots" of ourselves with others, and we form first impressions of one another. These are like neighbor relationships. In the church world, this may be standing in the lobby greeting people you know.
 - c. Personal space is where we are among "close friends," where we feel comfortable sharing personal details of our lives, though we still don't share everything in this context. This is the general level of a small group.
 - d. The final level is Intimate space, where we can be "naked but unashamed," where we can reveal and share our deepest selves. Most people only ever have a few truly intimate relationships.
3. You can see the Cigna press release on loneliness and mental health here: <https://www.cigna.com/newsroom/news-releases/2020/cigna-takes-action-to-combat-the-rise-of-loneliness-and-improve-mental-wellness-in-america>

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism/
4. Who have you been able to BLESS?