



Bible Studies

HOME

Feeling like you belong

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Introduction & Resources

St Luke's is a large church. On a Sunday and Thursday over 500 people walk up our driveway. That's 500 different faces, each with unique names and stories. And if everyone who calls St Luke's home was here at the same time, that's many more faces! St Luke's is also a growing church. Every week we have new people visiting our church, some figuring out if this is the church for them.

This means that we're a dynamic church, ever changing as people come and go. People visit us, new faces join our community, some stay - some leave.

We have the good desire to belong. But it can be hard to know everyone, to feel like this is our place, our home. It can be hard to feel like we belong when there are new faces all the time.

In the 2021 NCLS Survey, as a church we said that our top 2 future priorities should be:

1. Building a sense of community - 46%
2. Ensuring new people are included - 39%

Just under half of us feel that something is lacking within our community, and just under half of us are concerned that new people aren't being included as best they could.

So it's a joy that we get to reflect on what it means to belong as a community, to see what God has to say about how we do life together and how we can feel the reality of being part of Christ's body.

To feel like we belong, we must first know that we belong because of what Jesus has done. With this knowledge, we must decide to commit to belonging. Knowing we belong & committing to belonging, we love one another as we live with one another, helping us to feel the reality of our belonging. This love is an attractive light to the world, and so we must welcome people into our community and help them belong.

Resources

'A Place to Belong: Learning to Love the Local Church' by Megan Hill

'Gathered Together' by Karl Deenick

'Welcome' by Jen Oshman

'Belong' by Barnabas Piper

If you have any questions, please contact me at luke@stlukesmiranda.org.au

Study 1: You belong

Ephesians 2

1. Where do you feel like you most belong? Why?
2. Is there a relationship between *feeling* like you belong and *knowing* that you belong?

Read Ephesians 2

3. What does Paul say we all once were? What did our lives look like? (vv.1-3)
4. Where did we belong?
5. Where did we not belong? (vv.11-12)
6. But what has God done for us? What was our contribution? (vv.4-5, 8-9)
7. Where do we now belong? (v.6, 13) What is the nature of this belonging (see also Ephesians 4:15-16)

8. What is the time of all this coming into effect? (v.6)

9. What does being made alive in Jesus mean for living with other believers? (vv.14-18)

10. What is God's purpose in doing all this? (vv.15, 19-22)

11. What bearing do our feelings have on our belonging with Jesus in Heaven?

12. What does belonging with Jesus in Heaven mean for today?

13. Do you believe the truth that you belong at St Luke's because you belong to Jesus?
If not, what's stopping you from grasping this truth?

Please pray

- Pray for Sam and Jess, Percy, Lois, Finn and Cleo Morton. Pray for Sam as he heads up Youth Ministry and high school Scripture.
- Pray for Russell Denten as comes on staff to help us worship faithfully during our weekend and midweek gatherings.
- Pray for Rob and Jo, Lili, and Jemma Copland. Pray for Rob's work as the Anglican Chaplain at the University of Wollongong and for his work as Campus Director of the University Bible Group.

Study 2: Commit to belonging

Ephesians 4:1-16

1. Imagine you're on a soccer team. Some players have the time to turn up to both training and the games. Other players are busier, and so only have the time to turn up to the games. Which players do you think feel a greater sense of belonging? Why is that?

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

2. Knowing from last week that we belong to Jesus by faith, what does Paul call us to? (v.1)
3. What does this look like? How is belonging to other believers connected to this? (vv.2-3)
4. What is Paul's foundation for this? (vv.4-6)
5. In vv.7-11, it says Jesus has given to each of us 'grace' which takes the forms of different 'gifts'. Some of these people have gifts that enable them to be prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. What is the purpose in giving these to His body? How does this purpose shape how you think about a church community? (vv.12-16)
6. Read Hebrews 10:19-25. What is the author's encouragement for these believers?

7. Why do you think Paul & the author of Hebrews pushes us to keep meeting together?

8. Why are we tempted to not meet together as believers?

9. What's the difference between being committed to a particular local church and floating between churches?

10. How are you committed to the maturity and growth of your brother or sister in Christ?

11. How do you think how regularly we gather influences how much we feel like you belong?

Please pray

- Pray for our ongoing and various Children's, Youth, and Young Adults Ministries; that God would be using the leaders and volunteers to sow seeds and help people grow into mature and loving relationships with Jesus. Pray that this would be a great witness to the wider community.
- Pray for our ESL team who teach and share the love of Jesus with those in our community who are seeking to improve their language and connect with others. We pray those who attend will come to know true grace and freedom in Christ.
- Pray for Jess, Luke, Cooper, Ace and Penny Moran. Pray for Jess she heads up Children's Ministry at St Lukes, including KOS (Kids on Sunday), Primary Scripture, Children's Thursday arvo programs.

Study 3: Living out belonging

Colossians 3:1-17

1. Can you think of a moment where someone has made you feel like you do or don't belong? Either at work, clubs, church, school, etc.

Read Colossians 3:1-17

2. What opening truth does Paul remind us of? (vv.1-3) *Hint: we touched on this in Study 1
3. List what Paul calls us to be put to death in vv.5-9
4. What is Paul's justification for calling us to put these things to death? (vv.5-9)
5. How do these things impact living together as God's people?
6. List what Paul calls us to clothe ourselves with in vv.12-14

7. What is Paul's justification for calling us to clothe ourselves with these things? (vv.12-14)

8. How do these things impact living together as God's people? (And why does Paul call us to bear with, and forgive one another?)

9. How does how we live with one another affect our feeling of belonging?

10. Do you think it's ever right to leave a church because you don't feel like you belong?

11. How can you clothe yourself with all that Paul calls us to, and help someone at St Luke's feel like they belong?

Please pray

- Pray for David and Kathryn, Reuben and Felix Luis. Pray for David as Campus Director of Geelong Christian Union at the Deakin University Campus in Victoria.
- Pray for Peter, Katharine, Noah and Atticus Yock. Pray as they work amongst the students at the campus of Griffith University.
- Pray for Chaplains in Anglican retirement villages, especially Donald Robinson Village and Wooloware shores.

Study 4: Welcome into belonging

John 17:20-26

1. Have you ever come across a group of people and thought to yourself “what’s going on there? I’d like to be a part of that.”?

Read John 17:20-26

2. What is the state of the world? (v.25)
3. What does Jesus pray for the disciples and all future believers? (vv.20-21)
4. What is the purpose of this? (vv.20-21)
5. How does John 17:23 add to this?
6. In John 13:34-35, what does Jesus call us to do and why?

7. When someone who isn't a christian comes into our community, what is one thing we are to do? (Romans 10:14)

8. How does Jesus call & prayer change how you view community?

9. Are there limits to how welcoming we are to new people into a church community?

10. How can we prevent forming 'happy-holy-huddles'? (i.e. being too focused on ourselves & forgetting the outsider)

11. How can we welcome people into our church, helping them to feel like they belong?

Please pray

- Pray for our Church Wardens: Helen Webster, Phil Moss and Tim Clipsham. Pray for our Parish Councillors: Brendan Carpenter, Amanda Garlato, Wes Hill, Eli Lindeback, Alex Kiefer, Kathleen price and Simon Veltmeyer (also our treasurer). Pray for our Parish Nominators: Timothy Clipsham, Michael Easton, Amanda Garlato, Elise Hankin and Vicky Sawatt. Pray for our Synod Reps: Michael Easton and Amanda Garlato.

Bible Reading Plan

Not sure what to read this term? Haven't found a rhythm so far this year?? Join us in reading through Acts this term as we head towards our 'In Community' and 'Global Missions Week' series. What better way to think about Church and Mission than to see how they begun!

| May 29th–June 4th | | June 5th–11th | | June 12th–18th | | June 19th–25th | |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| | Acts 10:17–33 | | Acts 13:1–12 | | Acts 15:22–41 | | Acts 18:1–17 |
| | Acts 10:34–48 | | Acts 13:13–33 | | Acts 16:1–15 | | Acts 18:18–28 |
| | Acts 11:1–18 | | Acts 13:34–52 | | Acts 16:16–40 | | Acts 19:1–20 |
| | Acts 11:19–30 | | Acts 14:1–23 | | Acts 17:1–15 | | Acts 19:21–41 |
| | Acts 12:1–25 | | Acts 14:24–15:21 | | Acts 17:16–34 | | Acts 20:1–16 |
| | | | | | | | |
| June 26th–July 2nd | | July 3rd–9th | | July 10th–16th | | | |
| | Acts 20:17–38 | | Acts 23:12–35 | | Acts 26:12–32 | | |
| | Acts 21:1–16 | | Acts 24:1–21 | | Acts 27:1–12 | | |
| | Acts 21:17–40 | | Acts 24:22–25:12 | | Acts 27:13–38 | | |
| | Acts 22:1–21 | | Acts 25:13–27 | | Acts 27:39–28:10 | | |
| | Acts 22:22–23:11 | | Acts 26:1–11 | | Acts 28:11–30 | | |