

CELEBRATING FAITHFULNESS: Honoring a Pastor, Becoming a People

Key Passage: 1 Corinthians 16:10–11

BELONG

Ice Breaker Question:

If you could offer one word of gratitude to Pastor David, what would it be and why?

Leader Notes:

Thank everyone for sharing the words of gratitude and encouragement. It's clear that we recognize the importance of supporting our pastor. This leads us perfectly into our discussion of Pastor Danny's sermon from 1 Corinthians 16:10-11, where Paul gives practical guidance on how to create a healthy and supportive relationship between a pastor and his congregation. Let's turn to that passage now and explore what it means for us.

BELIEVE

Read 1 Corinthians 16:10–11

Paul is writing about Timothy, his young protégé in ministry, and giving the church instructions on how to treat him. These verses show us what kind of people make leadership a joy, not a burden.

1. Paul tells the Corinthians to “put him at ease” and “make sure he has nothing to fear.” Why do you think that was so important for Timothy—and what does that look like for a church today?

Leader Notes: Help the group notice that ministry often comes with spiritual and emotional weight. Fear and conflict can hinder God's work. Highlight how a supportive church gives their pastor confidence to lead boldly. We don't want our pastor to waste energy fighting internal battles. We want to be his encouragers, not his obstacles.

2. What does it mean when Paul says, “Let no one despise him”? How can we avoid making our leaders feel like they have to constantly prove themselves?

Leader Notes: Discuss how expectations can unintentionally become burdens. Emphasize grace, trust, and letting leaders be themselves. Point out that a healthy church offers their leaders the benefit of the doubt, not a checklist of demands. It means honoring their humanity, recognizing their calling, and remembering that leadership is lonely unless we have their back.

3. Paul encourages the church to “send him on his way in peace”—to be wind in his sail, not in his face. What are practical ways a church can do that today?

Leader Notes: Invite ideas—prayer, encouragement notes, flexibility, generosity, etc. Reinforce

the point that a church should help its leaders do what God has called them to do, not hold them back. It means we say, 'You've got this—and we're with you.' We carry the mission together.

BECOME

Read Hebrews 13:17.

Churches and pastors are in a partnership. Everyone plays a role in making ministry joyful and fruitful.

1. Pastor David has served faithfully for 20 years. What do you think it says about a church when a pastor stays that long—and what do you think helped make that possible?

Leader Notes: Let people celebrate Pastor David while also identifying the values in the church that made his longevity possible: humility, encouragement, shared vision, and love. Emphasize this is a shared accomplishment. It says we've been the kind of church that's made pastoring a joy. That's something worth protecting and continuing.

2. What is one way you can personally make it easier for our leaders to lead with joy?

Leader Notes: Encourage honest reflection—listening more, praying for them regularly, and serving faithfully. Point to the idea that honoring leadership is part of spiritual maturity.

Sample Answer: "I can stop complaining and start praying. I can choose to be a help instead of a critic."

Next Steps:

- **Write a note of encouragement** to Pastor David or another church leader this week.
- **Pray specifically for your leaders**—ask God to fill them with joy, peace, and fresh vision.
- **Memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13:**
"Respect those who labor among you...esteem them very highly in love because of their work."

