SOMA



Becoming an Authentic Community of Faith

Study Guide

First Presbyterian Church

Klamath Falls, OR

2020

*“I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”* John 17:23 (NIV)

*“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”* John 13:35 (NLT)

**SOMA**

Jesus said two astonishing things about the Church. I’ve read the verses listed above numerous but never grasped their meaning. See, I grew up at a time when Christians believed church membership was optional. “You can be a Christian and not go to church” was the consensus.

However, Jesus does not share the same view of Church membership. What Jesus is saying in these verses is that being active in a local church and loving those whom God loves is the key to world evangelism and the best way to silence those who attack the faith.

You might respond by saying, “That’s no big revelation Pastor, we know that. We will win people to the faith as we share the Gospel. And we can defend the faith by creating air-tight reasons to believe. Preaching to people and arguing with people is how the faith will be spread!” That’s a common belief in the Church but that’s not what Jesus says here. What Jesus is saying is it’s not what we ***say***that will win people to God and silence the critics but it’s what we ***show*** the world and its critics.

Do you get what Jesus is saying? The quality of our life together is the best form of **evangelism** and the best **polemic** for the faith. So it’s vital believers meet together. I’s how we grow in our own faith and it’s how we show the world that Jesus makes a real difference in people’s lives. He creates a fellowship that meets people’s most vital need – the need for community.

You might say: “But don’t we need to share the Gospel too?” Absolutely! But the world will not believe the Gospel until they first see the Gospel. If we proclaim a God of love who loves us and gave himself for us, but are unloving to one another then our message loses credibility. What Jesus is saying, and experience validates it, people need to see the Gospel before they are able to believe the Gospel.

Do you realize what this means? It means we need to get into shape! We need to work on the quality of our life together so that people see the reality of Jesus through the authenticity of our community. If we want to win people to Jesus and convince ardent critics that Jesus is real and can transform human life then we must become the “Body of Christ” as envisioned by God and revealed in scripture.

The purpose for the **SOMA** series is to help us get into shape. It’s to help us show Jesus to the world through how we treat one another.

You might ask: “How are we to treat one another?” Jesus made it easy for us. He spoke a lot about the quality of our body life in what is referred to as “one another” passages in the New Testament. During the seven weeks of the SOMA series we will look at these passages and learn how we are to treat one another.

My prayer is that we will authentically live out Jesus teachings so that people will see it, be amazed by the love we have for one another, and will want it for themselves. Make that your prayer as well: “That Christ may be formed in us” (Galatians 4:19). That we will become proficient at expressing the same love and grace we have experienced through Christ, ‘who loved us and gave himself for us.’” (Ephesians 5:2)

SOMA

Schedule

Week 1 2/23/20 “The Body of Christ”

Week 2 3/1/20 “Love One Another”

Week 3 3/8/20 “Accept One Another”

Week 4 3/15/20 “Be United to One Another

Week 5 3/22/20 “Encourage One Another”

Week 6 3/29/20 “Restore One Another”

Week 7 4/5/20 “Serve One Another”

Tips for Small Groups

You can use the discussion guide for personal study or family devotions. If you decide meet with a small group to do the study together, may I offer a few tips to help you get the most out of the series:

1. **Focus on application,** **not information**. The information on each of the “one another passages” will be shared through the weekly messages during worship. Though you may want to review the content of the message, use the bulk of your time focusing in on how to apply the message. Ask: “What would it look in my life and in our church if we practiced this characteristic?”
2. **Don’t try to do it alone.** Create a job list and ask people to help out. Share the facilitator role, when possible. If food is being served, create a signup sheet and ask everyone to take a turn. If your group has children decide how you will handle them and share the task and/or the cost. Even if you don’t have children. It will bless those who do in your group. It’s a great way of showing love for one another!
3. **Be prepared.** Review the message and the questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to drill each quality down into your heart until they become automatic responses. Minimize distractions by taking into consideration: Seating, temperature, lighting, food/drink, surrounding noise, & time.

If you meet later in the week or if someone in the group misses the message, you can go to [http://www.klamathfpc.com/sermons/](about:blank) to listen to the sermon. The questions are built off of the message. So to understand the questions better you need to hear the message.

1. **Limit the small group time to 1.5 hours.** I know it’s going to be a challenge to meet for seven consecutive weeks, so make it easy on people.
2. **Break up into smaller groups.** Break up into groups of 4-5 people. We want everyone to participate. Any larger and introverted people fade into the background.
3. **When you ask a question, be patient**. Someone will eventually respond. Give people time to think.
4. **No one dominates**. Encourage those who tend to respond quickly to voluntarily hold back. Observe who is not participating and ask them about their thoughts.
5. **Affirm and follow up on input**. Point out something helpful or true about a response. Build community by following a response with a question. Ask how others have experienced something similar or how a truth has shaped their understanding of the topic. People are less likely to speak up if they fear that you aren’t really interested in what they think or feel or if you are looking for a certain answer.
6. **Keep connecting with your group.** Consider connecting your members through email, texting, or social media. Mid-week, ask everyone to share a story of how they are living out the quality being studied currently. Begin each succeeding week with ‘Praise Reports.” After the series is over, consider throwing a SOMA party and share what God did in your life during the series.

“The Body of Christ”

I Corinthians 12:27

Week 1 Application Questions

Believe it or not, as astounding as this may sound, according to Jesus the number one tool of God for reaching the world with the Gospel is the Church. The Church is God’s primary method of evangelism. The church is also God’s best apologetic to the world who finds every reason possible not to believe in Him. Jesus said that if the Church acts like the Church God envisioned, we will reach the world for Christ.

But what does it mean to be the “Body of Christ?” We are familiar with the human body so the image used by the Apostle Paul to describe the Church is extremely helpful. It is packed with incredible meaning and implications. Some are easy to understand and others take some thought to grasp the full weight of their meaning.

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1. Getting at the meaning of the phrase “Body of Christ” isn’t that complicated really. The phrase itself is rather straightforward. All you have to ask is: “What did the original “Body of Christ” do? For answers to that question scan your memory of the Gospels.

Brainstorm as a group what Jesus did. Make a list. Once that is done ask yourself: “What one quality of Jesus’ life or one form of service stands out to you and why?

Identify the trait in Jesus’ life that is most lacking in your life and make it your goal to work on it during the SOMA series. Share it with your small group (4-5 people) and ask them to hold you accountable.

You’ll need to wrestle with why you struggle with this characteristic or practice. Don’t get down on yourself. Guilt will never help you change. The desire to be obedient to Christ, will.

1. In this week’s message I talked about the first two qualities God revealed about himself to us. God describes himself as “compassionate and gracious.” (Exodus 34:6) The same two characteristics are seen in the life of Jesus.

What would it look like in your life, small group, and the church if you/we were to become “compassionate?”

What would it look like in your life, small group, and the church if we were to become gracious?

1. Every human body, if it’s alive, has a head. The Head of the “Body of Christ” is Jesus (Colossians 1:18) What does this imply about our connection to Christ in relationship to our ability to be gracious and compassionate to others?

What are you doing to stay connected to the Head? Be honest. Don’t fake it. If your devotional life is non-existent, be real. Most of us carry a boat load of guilt on our shoulders. It may help everyone feel some relief that there are others who struggle to spend time with God.

1. Every human head has a brain that interprets and filters the messages received from the surrounding world. What this means for us is, we need to allow Christ to interpret and filter the world around us so that we see what he sees and we respond the way he would respond.

Imagine how your day would go if you intentionally tried to view life from Jesus’ perspective. What would that look like? Would it change how you view and/or respond to: your boss, co-workers, everyday acquaintances, spouse, children, the person who irritates you the most, the person who hurt you the deepest, the rude person you just encountered, and the people you see at church?

Pick a day this week and begin it with a prayer: “Jesus, help me see what you see. Help me to interpret what people say and do the way you would, and respond the way you would.” Record what happened that day and share it with the group next week.

1. The original “Body of Christ” (Jesus) was “God Incarnate,” meaning, he was God in human flesh. Jesus had a physical nature. God did not remain in heaven and shout down the “good news.” He came down to us physically. In so doing he became:

visible, accessible, approachable, and touchable.

As the current “Body of Christ” we need to embody the Gospel as well. I call this the “physicality of the Gospel.” People need to see the Gospel in order to believe it. The Gospel has to be visible in us first before others are willing to believe our message.

Look at those four expressions of being the physical body of Jesus. What would it look like in your life if you were to embody the Gospel to others?

What would it look like for us as a church to embody the Gospel-to be a physical, tangible expression of the person of Jesus? Would anything change at FPC and if so, what would change? What would we add to our ministry and what would we get rid of?

“Love One Another”

John 13:34-35

Week 2 Application Questions

Designers and product manufacturers are known by their brand. An apple with a bite out of it alerts consumers to a certain standard of quality, functionality, and creativity. When you see this icon it reminds you of Apple. A product that is stamped with this image, you know it’s an Apple product. Two illuminated golden arches shouts to small kids that a McDonalds is nearby and mom and dad need to stop and pick up a Happy Meal with a toy inside. Trademarks, logos and other branding tools distinguish a company.

The Church has a trademark: Love. Before Jesus left earth he gave his disciples a “new command.” He told us to “love one another.” What does that mean? There are over 28 definitions of love. Jesus knew that so he defined it for us: “as I have loved you.” (John 13:34-35)

The cross is God’s icon and love is his brand. When people see a cross it should remind them of God’s love. And when people experience Christians who worship a God of love, they should come away with that same reminder: “God loves me.”

Love needs to permeate the Christian life and every Christian church that displays the cross as its icon. Our behavior needs to match our brand. The depth and intensity of the love God has expressed to us vertically is the same depth and intensity of love we are to express to one another.

Loving one another within the Church is training ground to learn how to love those out in the world.

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1. “As I have loved you” refers to the cross. The cross is God’s concrete definition of love. The cross defines love in this way: Love is service for the good of others at personal cost without regard to personal benefit.

Use this definition of love and discuss how it would change the shape of your personal life, relationships, service, attitude toward others, and outlook.

1. Jesus singed out several groups of people for us to love. He challenged the limits people place on their love and encouraged his followers to expand the parameters of their love to include:
2. An enemy (Matthew 5:44)
3. People of other ethnic backgrounds, especially when you have are prejudicial feeling towards a particular group of people.
4. Fellow believers and those outside the faith. (Galatians 6:10 –“especially the household of God does not mean “only the household of God)
5. The poor (James 2:14-17)

Read these passages and then discuss what “loving one another as I have loved you” looks like when applied to each one of these individuals/groups.

Once you’ve finished this discussion identify a person/group that you struggle to love “as Jesus loved us” and discuss why you struggle to love them.

1. “As I have loved you” makes a connection between vertical love for God and our horizontal love for others. What this means is the love we experience from God should match the love we express towards others.

What would it look like for the vertical love you have experienced in Christ to match your horizontal love for others?

1. “As I have loved have loved you” also implies that if we want to love others the same way we have been loved by Jesus, then we need to grasp the love he has for us and internalize it. The hotter your love relationship with God is the hotter your love will become towards others.

How is your relationship with God? What are doing to draw closer to the Lord so your love for him is hotter rather than cooler?

1. Jesus used another simile to help us grasp what true love looks like. In

Matthew 22: 37-39 he added “as yourself.”

Loving others “as ourselves” means we love them in the way they want to be loved. We don’t love people in the same way we receive love. What this means is in order to love someone we need to get to know them first.

So what would it take to get to know:

* The members of your small group?
* The members of your church?
* A person of a different ethnic group or social economic strata?
* A non-believer?
* An enemy? (We are called to love them too, as hard as it is!

1. To love “others as ourselves” implies that we not only take on attitudes and actions that are experienced by the other person as loving but it also implies we get rid of attitudes and actions that are experienced as unloving.

Brainstorm a list of attitudes and actions that are unloving. After you have finished, look at the list and discuss how to get rid of these unloving habits.

**Project: End on a positive note by sharing a time when you experienced the love of God through a member(s) of your church**.

“Accept One Another”

Romans 15:7

Week 3 Application Questions

The church is a family. You can pick your friends but you can’t pick the members of your family. And every family is made up of a variety of characters. Every family has a few members who require an added measure of grace. Yet every family exists because, though very different, each person accepts the other just as he/she is, wrinkles and all.

The same is true about the Family of God. We have all been accepted into the Family of God by grace. The same kind of acceptance we experienced through Jesus is the same kind of acceptance we are to express to one another.

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1. Read Romans 15:7; John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-9. List the conditions and qualifications you had to meet before Jesus accepted you.

To help, let me ask you some further questions:

* Was there an age requirement?
* Was there a gender requirement?
* Was there a racial or ethnic requirement?
* Was there a socio-economic requirement?
* Was there a marital status requirement?
* Was there a language requirement?
* Was there a country of origin requirement?
* Was there a height or weight requirement?
* Was there a moral or spiritual condition requirement?
* Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What would it look like for you to accept others on the same basis as Jesus did?

What practices and prejudices would need to go for you to become as accepting of others as Jesus?

What practices and prejudices would need to go for FPC to become as accepting of others as Jesus?

What practices would need to be implemented for you to become as accepting of other as Jesus? What practices would need to be implemented for the church to become as accepting of other as Jesus?

1. Share a time when you experienced the radical acceptance of Jesus. You may have experienced acceptance though a person or group outside the Church. Feel free to share it. Some people or groups do a better job of expressing unconditional acceptance than the Church.
2. Share a time when people made it clear to you that you were not welcome and did not belong. What did that experience teach you about accepting others as Jesus accepted you?
3. In what ways have you felt the acceptance of Jesus through those who worship together at FPC?

In what ways have you felt excluded or made to feel as if you did not fit in well here?

What can we do better to demonstrate the radical acceptance of Jesus to others and to one another?

1. Read Revelation 7:7-9. God gives a picture of what he wants the Church to look like.

Imagine you were worshipping in a church like that.

* What would excite you?
* What would be some challenges for you?
* What would the leadership of that worshiping body need to do so create the atmosphere of inclusion so a diverse body of people could worship tether so beautifully?
* Is that something you could support if it were to happen at FPC?

“Be United to One Another”

Philippians 2:1-4

Week 4 Application Questions

Disconnected body parts are something you see in horror movies. Body parts are not meant to be disconnected from the body. When they are its horrible and disgusting. People find it repulsive.

The same thing is true about the body of Christ. It is made up of many parts and those parts are never meant to be disconnected. They are meant to be connected. When the body of Christ comes a part and body parts are disconnected from the Body it’s horrifying and it repulses people. No one wants to be around monsters, nor a monster church. This is why it’s so vital for believers to learn how to be united to one another.

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1. The modern analogy of Frankenstein is helpful to highlight the importance of unity in a local church. Paul called the Church the “Body of Christ.” (I Corinthians 12:27) The human body is an illustration of the Church, in particular, the unity of the Church.

Contrast the difference between the human body and the body of Frankenstein.

In what ways is the Church more like a human body and in what ways does the Church seem to function more like Frankenstein’s body?

1. Have you ever been a part of a Church that experienced a split or a horrible conflict that resulted in the Body of Christ coming apart? What was the experience like?

What did believers do that caused the division to become worse and more horrifying to watch or go through?

What can we do to protect the Church from this kind of debilitating conflict?

1. Read Philippians 2:1-4. Identify practices to incorporate and practices to get rid of that enhance the unity of the Church.
2. Read Romans 12:10, 16, 18; I Corinthians 1:10; 12:25. Identify practices that lead to unity and ones that do not.
3. Read Ephesians 4:1-6. According to this passage what will help unite the church?

What can we do as a church to help connect people better?

**Close by praying for the unity of FPC.**

“Encourage One Another”

Hebrew 10:19-25

Week 5 Application Questions

Every sports team has cheerleaders. Regardless of what happens on the field, their role is to cheer on the players. That doesn’t mean they always agree with the decisions of the coach or the performance of the players. However, no matter what happens on or off the field, they are **for** the team.

The same is true about the Church. We are to be each other’s cheerleaders. We do not have to agree with what the leaders of the Church are doing or like the conduct or attitudes of the people with whom we worship. We all have bad days where we are irritable. We are all imperfect and can at times grate on each other. Despite all this, we are still called to be there for each other, cheering one another on!

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1. Discuss the sermon. What did you hear? What questions do you have? Use the questions below to further unpack the message and the topic.

As always, don’t feel you need to cover all the questions. Rank each one prior to the meeting so you discuss the ones you feel are most important.

1. “To encourage” literally means “to come along side to help.” Jesus used the same word to describe the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives:

*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another* ***comforter*** *to help you and be with you forever—“* (John 14:16)

The Holy Spirit is one source of encouragement for our lives. Another source is the local church, fellow believers. We are not called to be one another’s judge and critic, despite the common practice within churches among believers. Instead, we are called to help one another.

Share an instance when you were discouraged and a fellow believer came alongside your life to encourage you. What did they  **say** that was timely? (See Proverbs 25:11)

What did they **do** that you found helpful?

(Are you discouraged right now? If so please be open to sharing it with the group so they can practice encouragement.)

1. Name three people who encourage you. List what they say or do that you find encouraging.
2. Do you tend to be a more of a critic or more of an encourager?

Read James 2:19-20. What does James tell us to do in order to be a more encouraging person?

1. What do you personally find to be discouraging? Make a list of things people can say or do that is very discouraging.

Now make a list of things people can say or do that you find encouraging.

What would it take for you to be a better encourager?

1. Read Proverbs 25:11 and Ephesians 4:29. If you took this verse to heart what difference would it make in your speech-life?

**Project: End the time together by practicing saying encouraging words. In your small group share one thing you like about the people in your group. Whatever is said to you, do not make a comment about it. Just receive it!**

“Restore One Another”

Galatians 6:1-5

Week 6 Application Questions

Hospitals exist because people get sick and they need help to get well. When people go to the hospital they don’t expect to be ignored or made to feel worse about their situation. They go to get help. They are looking for help.

The Church is God’s spiritual hospital. It exists because all of us are spiritually ill and need help to get well. All of us are broken and in need of mending. All of us are addicted to sin and need people who love us enough to intervene. We are to be God’s “first responders” offering assistance and care for those trapped by sin and God’s caregivers who nurse one another back to health.

In Galatians 6:1-5 Paul assumes something we do not. He assumes Christians are going to get themselves into trouble. More than that, he assumes Christians are going to fall to things that will enslave them, making it impossible for them to break free without assistance from others. As a result, Paul teaches the Galatians what to do when a fellow believer is “caught” (Like a fish on a hook) in a sin.

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Pick and choose the questions you feel are the most important. Don’t feel the need to cover them all. They are merely an aid to help keep the discussion going.

1. Compare and contrast how Christian organizations and the average workplace handle those who experience a major moral failure. Who handles these situations better in your opinion?
2. Galatians 6 not only sets forth a process for restoring a person who has experienced a moral failing, it also encourages us to restore those who are overwhelmed by life. He uses the word “burdens.” List burdens that can overwhelm us.

Which “burdens” do Churches handle and which ones are we not good at handling?

Some examples to help the discussion flow: financial, psychological, relational, marital, and emotional.

1. Which needs are you better equipped to handle?
2. What situations do you feel il-equipped to respond to?

If the church offered training that would equip you to handle these situations, would you take advantage of the training?

(Facilitator: Please forward the areas of training people in your group would find helpful. Send the list to [rpfeil@klamathfpc.com](about:blank). )

1. Have you ever been involved with restoring a fallen family member, friend or fellow believer? Share your experience.
2. What is your default response to those who fail morally or who are burdened by life? Do you tend to: (pick all that apply to you)

* Ignore the person
* Become fearful of the person
* Blame the person
* Scold the person
* Hammer the person with truth
* Enable the person
* Pity the person
* Empathize with the person
* Want to help but feel overwhelmed by the person
* Try to rescue the person
* You team up with others to offer assistance to the person
* You refer the person to the Pastor

How do you view those who get themselves into trouble?

What would it look like in your life to align your life and attitudes with what Paul teaches about restoring fellow believers?

“Serve One Another”

John 13:1-17

Week 7 Application Questions

It’s hard to find a full-service gas station today. What is a full service gas station? They existed in the 50’s and 60’s. It’s a gas station where a team of people run out to your car and pump the gas, wash your windows, check your oil level and tire pressure, filling both if needed. All you have to do is pay for the gas. The rest of the services come with the fuel.

Nowadays everything is self-serve. (Except in Oregon. They pump your gas!) We have become a do-it-yourself culture, which makes it difficult being a follower of Jesus because his Church is a full-service station. We are called by God to work as a team to serve one another. Christ came to serve, not to be served. As his followers we are called to do the same, serve and not be served.

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It’s the last time you have to read this. Use only the questions you find most helpful to unpack the above passage, the topic and discuss the message.

1. In the sermon the Pastor used the phrases “worship service” or “worship selfish.” Based on his explanation of the two terms, which one best describes the average church-goers approach to worship?

In what ways can the Church perpetuate the consumer mentality that worship is for the benefit of the hearer? Who is the primary benefactor of worship?

1. Are you serving the people of your church? If so share what you are doing. If not, share what is keep you from being involved in some form of service?

What can the church and its leaders do to inspire greater volunteerism?

1. The Pastor spent some time talking about the “Why” of service. Why do people serve in organizations, charitable groups, or volunteer for a community service project?

What would it look like in your life for you to participate in one ministry that serves either the church or the community because of what Christ has already done for you instead of looking for some personal blessing or benefit?

1. Is there anyone in your life who you admire because of their selfless acts of service?
2. Consider taking on one act of service as a small group. What would it be? To help you get at the service that best fits your group discuss the following question:

What is everyone passionate about?

If you can identify one thing, schedule a day to do it, one time and see what it feels like.

If you are having a hard time trying to come up with mission ideas, let me help. Here are some ideas to consider:

* Organize a block party. Invite all your neighbors. Ask everyone to bring something and to RSVP so you know who is coming. Tell people why you are doing it – “You don’t know your neighbors and would really like to get to know them. No other agenda!”
* Your kids are involved in sports. You don’t really know the parents of the other kids on team. Everyone is rushed to make the game and some come hungry. Maybe you can provide a lunch or snack for the group. Allow it to be a platform for building new friendships.
* Your small group is full of foodies. Plan to eat together once a month and invite non-churched friends to join you. Let them experience what authentic relationships look like. Avoid inside jokes, church business, etc. Focus on getting to know everyone.
* Here’s a crazy idea. Contact a Pharmaceutical company and see what they can offer our community in the way of lower prescription costs. A big need in Klamath Falls is for low/no cost prescription drugs.
* You are a dentist or you know dentists who are willing to serve the needy in the area. Offer free dental exams at the church, inviting several dentists to participate. Tap into government funds and funds from charitable foundations to finance the work.
* A plot of land is an eyesore to your neighborhood. As a small group go clean it up and start a community garden.
* Your group is pretty handy around the house. Identify families in the area who need home repairs. Solicit materials from the local hardware stores. Do an on-sight visit and make a list of achievable goals. What is needed most and offer to do the repair for free. If this ministry takes off, ask the church to make it a part of the budget.
* You love to bowl, play billiards, golf etc. Others in your group enjoy the same thing. Form a league of your own and invite non-believers to join you (Just a handful) and as a group develop friendships with these people.
* Start a food distribution ministry at the church and hand out groceries to the community. Contact the local Foodbank to see if FPC can become a food distribution center for them.
* Adopt a school and ask the PTO how your group can serve them.
* Adopt a block of the city that is in need. Go door-to-door and distribute a note telling people on a particular day you will be coming around to distribute food boxes. On the target day, deliver the boxes with a note that the food has been provided to them by FPC as an act of love for our community.
* Sponsor a Parents Night Out at the church for the community. Your group will watch the kids while the parents have a free night out together without the burdensome cost of childcare.
* Other (Be creative)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

SOMA PARTY!

Congratulations on your completion of SOMA!

I pray God used the series to bring you closer to Him and closer to His Family, the Church. We are the Body of Christ. God has a purpose for us. We are to:

* **Love one another**
* **Accept one another**
* **Be united to one another**
* **Encourage one another**
* **Restore one another**
* **Serve one another**

If we live these out in community together with integrity as a church Jesus said two things will happen:

*“Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”* John 17:23 (NIV)

*“Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”* John 13:35 (NLT)

Think about that. We will draw people to Jesus because they will see him tangibly in our midst through the depth of our community, and we will convince those who are skeptical of our faith as to the reality of Jesus. What a mission! That’s something worth giving your life to.

SOMA may be over but our efforts to be an authentic community of faith who loves Jesus and extends the grace we have experienced in Christ to our community never ends. We are a work in progress. What God has started among us via SOMA has to be continued every Sunday. We have to stay vigilant to walk this out until everyone in our community knows the love of God.

So continue to put into practice what you have learned. *“Continue to spur one another on in love and good works”* (Hebrews 10:24)

Also seriously consider throwing a SOMA party and share what God did in your life during the series. The series ends during Holy Week. Don’t feel you have to meet during Easter. Meet the week or two after and celebrate what God did in and through you.

Lastly, do me a favor. I’d love to hear what God did in the lives of those in your group. Please email me at: rpfeil@Klamathfpc.com and share your stories with me.

In Christ’s love,

*Pastor Richard*