

Week One.

STRENGTH TO SUSTAIN YOU

01

It's easy to drift away from the church, especially with the disruption that COVID forced on our normal routines. We don't need to go; we can watch online. We won't be missed. We unconsciously adopted a new normal with reordered priorities and church has fallen down on the list. But church is essential.

The Bible teaches that it must be a high priority in our lives, or we will miss out on some very important benefits that will affect both our spiritual life and our quality of life. God wants to meet us in the gathering of his people, where he will sustain us, strengthen us, teach us and give us a story and a purpose for our lives. We are better together!

WEEK 01 / STRENGTH TO SUSTAIN YOU	1 - 8
WEEK 02 / A STORY TO SHARE	9 - 16
WEEK 03 / TRUTH TO LIVE BY	17 - 24
WEEK 04 / PEOPLE TO DO LIFE WITH	25 - 32
WEEK 05 / A PURPOSE TO LIVE FOR	33 - 40

Introduction.

Together we find the strength we need to sustain us when life seems to spiral out of control and we feel exhausted, frustrated and powerless to make sense of the world around us. God's Spirit, working through the church, stands ready to encourage us, help us, and sustain us as we gather together with God's people.

Starter Questions

In what ways did COVID disrupt or reorder your priorities? What areas of your life are in need of restructuring? In what ways has God sustained you through his people and their influence in your life?

What's one idea from this week's sermon that impacted you or how have you responded to the Call to Action?

Into the Word.

1. READ HEBREWS 10:22-25

Why does the author of Hebrews warn readers about neglecting to meet together? What benefits of meeting together are mentioned? During seasons when you have been unable to meet together, what did you miss the most?

2. READ ACTS 2:1, 42-47

How did the early church experience community? How do you see the church of today practicing community? How are they similar or different?

Into the Word.

3. READ ACTS 2:5-12

How did the miracle of Pentecost demonstrate the power of the unified church? Because they were together, all the believers experienced the miracle of speaking in unlearned foreign languages. The work of God through the church was echoed farther, louder and longer. How do you think God is working through our church today to show His glory to our community all around us?

4. PETER DENIES JESUS

Peter denied Jesus when he was alone, but beginning with Acts 2:14, notice how Peter proclaimed him openly and boldly as he was surrounded by fellow believers. How might you account for such a transformation?

Application.

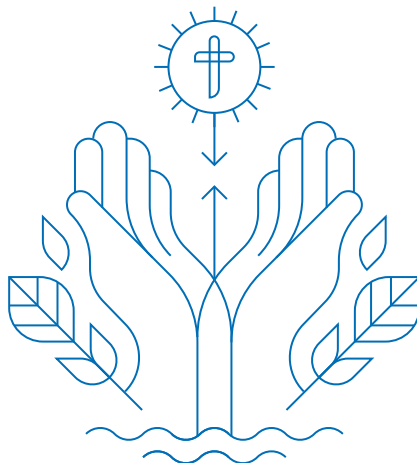
1. What benefits do you derive personally by being consistent in gathering with the church? What personal challenges or obstacles keep you from gathering together with believers regularly and how might you overcome those obstacles?

2. How has God used the church to support and encourage you in the past, and how did that help to sustain you? Who needs your support and encouragement today? How can God use you to help sustain someone in your group or in the church?

3. What does Peter's boldness teach us about the benefit of community? How can gathering together support and encourage you to use your story and your talents to share the hope of Jesus in your sphere of influence?

Closing Prayer.

Heavenly Father, thank you for the evidence of your mighty power, which you poured out on the Day of Pentecost. We marvel at what you did through Peter and how you used him to bring thousands into the church. You sustained that early church through your Spirit and through the strength of community. Please strengthen and sustain us in this circle of community. May we have eyes to see those we can encourage and those who need our help. Use each of us to make this church better together. In Christ's name, Amen.



Through the **Week.**

Morning Prayer

Father, as I arise to this new morning, I praise you for sustaining me for yet another day. Satisfy me in this morning with your steadfast love, that I may rejoice and be glad all my days. Thank you for your Spirit, who indwells me, strengthens me, and guides me as I desire to love and encourage those around me. Thank you for making me a part of your church and for the fellow believers with whom I am journeying. No matter what this day brings, help me to trust that you watch over my coming and going both now and forevermore. I pray in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Evening Prayer

O God, you have brought me safely to the end of this day. You have sustained me by your love and mercy. Thank you for the encouragement I felt today through your word and your people. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to encourage others. As I close my day, I worship you. Each day you command your steadfast love and each night your song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. Now I lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety. Amen.

