



We
BELONG
To Each Other

PORTICO
LEARNING HUB



ESSENTIALS - MODULE 8



"You may already have some awareness of who we are at PORTICO, how we function, and you may have even been part of our church family for quite some time. In fact, people in this day and age are “members” of a church long before they are official members of a church.

Church Membership is important for a lot of reasons, helping us function as an organization and a registered charity. But in this module we’re not really going to focus on those reasons. Those are the ways that help us govern lawfully, legally and efficiently. However in this module we will learn the spiritual and Biblical reasons that committing to membership is critical. In this module, we’ll discuss how attending and participating in the church, and officially committing to a church family is so important in your journey of faith."

Rick Carroll

Key Takeaways



01
THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY




02
THE CHURCH FAMILY IS FULLY INCLUSIVE



03
EVERY FAMILY MEMBER SHARES
RESPONSIBILITY



04
EACH FAMILY MEMBER HAS
A UNIQUE ROLE TO PLAY



*...so in Christ we, though
many, form one body, and
each member belongs to
all the others.*

ROMANS 12:5 (NLT)

01

The Church Is A Family

Churches in our society are mostly known by addresses, buildings, denominations, or styles. You can Google a church, get an address and show up. But these institutions actually detract from the essence of what it means to be a church.

Belonging to a church means intentionally choosing to be part of a family, demonstrating love and belonging to each other.


If the church was an institution, then membership would be about signing up, and paying dues. But the best Biblical metaphor for Church is a family. All believers worldwide are part of this family. And since this is a family, not an institution, the key piece of membership is care.

We participate in membership at a local church so we can trust each other, to care for each other. Paul's teaching that we belong to each other means we have a specific responsibility to that family.

If church was about showing up when and how you please, whenever someone is going through a hard season, you may not be someone they can count on. But family is designed to be there for each other in each and every season. Even to the point of personal sacrifice.



The Church is not a building or an address.



*Share each other's burdens,
and in this way obey the law
of Christ.*

GALATIANS 6:2 (NLT)



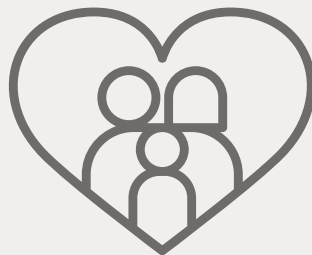
VOLUNTEER

Every individual who participates in PORTICO's ministries should experience this kind of love and care from the other members. So when one member hurts, others hurt along with them.

This means we intentionally get to know other people, learn about their lives and journey through the different seasons of life with them, celebrate graduations and new jobs, and mourn the loss of family members together.

In a larger church like PORTICO with different service times, locations and online options, you will never be able to know everyone, even at your campus. But you can know some of the congregation.

Making a membership commitment means choosing to be part of this family.



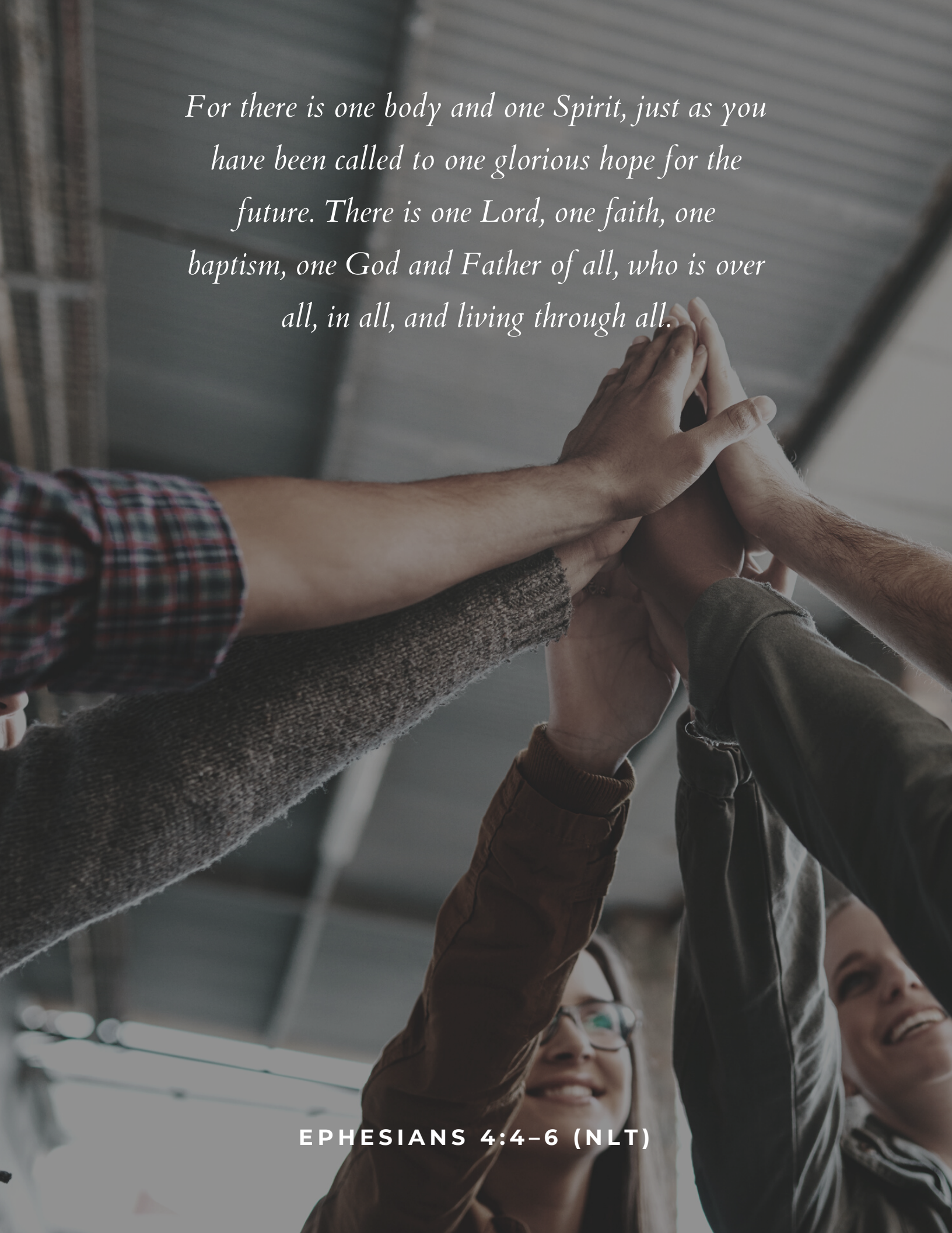
**PORTICO's core value of CONNECT
is all about connecting with Christ, and His family.**



Reflection #1

In what ways would you need to adjust your faith practices, so that you are participating in a family, more than just belonging to an institution?

How are you sharing someone else's burdens?

A group of people are shown from the chest up, with their hands stacked in a circle in the center. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a window. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

*For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you
have been called to one glorious hope for the
future. There is one Lord, one faith, one
baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over
all, in all, and living through all.*

EPHESIANS 4:4-6 (NLT)

The Church Family Is Fully Inclusive

The range of people who are part of PORTICO is too large to measure. We have people who have been following Jesus for decades, and new families attending every Sunday.

Each person, and each perspective is welcomed and honoured to be part of our time of worship together. It doesn't mean that we will agree with every perspective represented by the people in the room, but they welcome to be part of the PORTICO family.

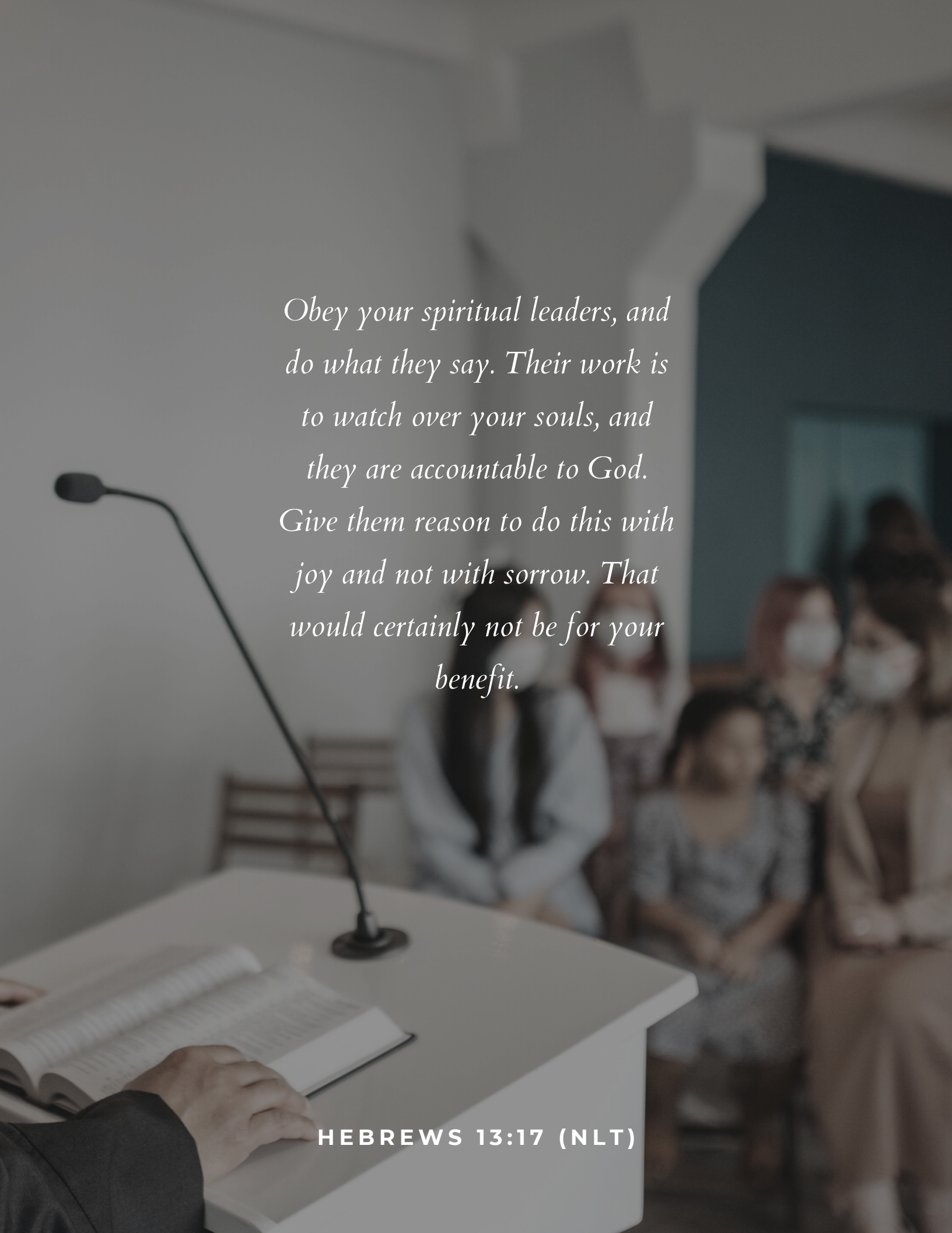
Galatians 3:28 is a fantastic teaching by Paul about the people included in their gatherings in the early church.

“There is no longer Jew or Gentile.”

There is a fundamental difference in how the Jews and early Christians understood and practiced the worship of God. In the modern day church we have traditionalists who love hymns, and some attendees who love lights and smoke, while others who prefer quiet meditation.

In Paul's day, the Jews were traditionalists, while the Gentiles were worldly but curious. There were slaves and free men, and the power, money, and difference in lives between these two groups was maintained by society. There was an extreme imbalance between the rights of men and women, and a huge separation in class and education. Paul recognized that this was not how the Church was supposed to act.

For you are all one in Christ Jesus.



*Obey your spiritual leaders, and
do what they say. Their work is
to watch over your souls, and
they are accountable to God.
Give them reason to do this with
joy and not with sorrow. That
would certainly not be for your
benefit.*

HEBREWS 13:17 (NLT)

When we commit to being in the church family, we commit to including people who think, act, and operate differently than we do. And still love them as family members.

Anyone, who is willing to submit themselves to the teachings of Scripture, and uphold the statement of faith and community values is welcome, included and an equal member at PORTICO.

There are many who are on a journey of faith, and who struggle to fully align with what the Bible teaches about how we handle our money (tithes/offering), relationships (sexuality), and time (Sabbath).

Anyone in their faith journey is welcome to become a church member, remembering that membership is a free and intentional choice to live one's life according to Biblical principles.

In our inclusive community at PORTICO, we practice submission. We all submit to Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives and His teaching. We agree to uphold Biblical truths.

Our church is part of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), and PORTICO is governed by an Elder Board. The Senior Pastor submits to the Elders on the governance of church policies, while the Elders submit to the Senior Pastor on matters relating to ministry.


The church family submits to the leadership of the church.



Reflection #2

What habit or mindset do you have that is a potential threat to the inclusive nature of PORTICO?

Are there any questions you need answered before you are able to submit to PORTICO leadership, the PAOC, or Jesus Christ as Lord?

A close-up photograph of hands holding a small glass of red wine and a piece of bread, symbolizing the Lord's Supper. The hands are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with the wine glass held in the right hand and a piece of bread in the left. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

HEBREWS 13:17 (NLT)

03

Every Family Member Shares Responsibility

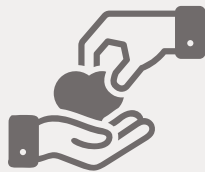
Being part of this family is less about what you get, and more about what is expected of you. It's opposite to our culture's understanding of membership. Membership typically means rewards, free things, and benefits. However, being a member at PORTICO means you will give more than you tangibly get.

In the end, we do receive a wonderful life from this commitment, but the motive should be in giving, not receiving.


In our day and age there are lots of ways to participate at church. What's "normal" in our culture is that people will attend a church service once or twice a month.

In Acts, we learn that they daily met at the temple, and their devotion was to the corporate meetings in homes for teaching.

As a church member, the Bible teaches us that we are to commit to regular participation in gatherings and groups.



**Christ's teaching is counter-cultural:
The last are first, and to gain life
you will need to give it away.**

A close-up photograph of several hands of different skin tones clasped together in a prayerful gesture. The hands are resting on a dark, textured book cover. The background is a dark, button-down shirt. The overall mood is solemn and spiritual.

*So, his master said, 'Go out into the
country lanes and behind the hedges
and urge anyone you find to come,
so that the house will be full.'*

LUKE 14:23 (NLT)

In our day and age there are lots of ways to participate at church. What's "normal" in our culture is that people will attend a church service once or twice a month. In contrast, in the book of Acts we learn that the Early Church met daily at the temple, and their devotion was to the corporate meetings in homes.

We're often guilty of letting culture set our rhythms for life. Members of His body are called to a higher standard.


As believers, we should commit to becoming active participants in building the kingdom of God, not just Sunday attendees. And since we are part of the family of Christ, we are responsible to go and share the truth we have about Jesus, helping find their way back to God.

In reality, this should be a natural overflow of who we are as Christians. Once you've found freedom and joy in Jesus, your natural instinct will be to share that joy with others.

Sharing is not just a physical thing, it's a spiritual process, undergirded by prayer.



**Regularly commit to praying for your church family,
and for those who would join the family of believers.**

A hand is shown dropping a coin into a clear glass jar. The jar is partially filled with coins. In the background, there are several stacks of coins on a surface. The scene is set against a blurred background of white flowers.

*On the first day of each week,
you should each put aside a
portion of the money you
have earned. Don't wait until
I get there and then try to
collect it all at once.*

1 CORINTHIANS 16:2 (NLT)

So while we're talking about shared responsibility, we've talked about our time, energy and focus cost. There is definitely a physical cost as well.

As church members, we all share the costs of running a church.

The Bible is very clear about our responsibility to sacrificially give to God's work and Kingdom.

The right thing, done with the wrong attitude, is not the right thing to do. Jesus reprimanded the Pharisees who practiced tithing, giving ten percent of what they earned, or produced. But they were legalistic about it.

We believe that a tithe is the baseline of generosity. When God was establishing Israel, 10% was what He portioned off as giving.

As members, we share the responsibility of giving, knowing that tithing is Scriptural. Our attitude should not be to grudgingly give our money to the Church. Tithing is a recognition that all we have belongs to God, and that we are simply the stewards.


**At PORTICO, one of our core values is GROW -
that together we are regularly growing
and becoming more like Jesus.**



Reflection #3

What would have to change in your faith life and practices, if you were to commit to being a member of PORTICO?

Do you regularly give your time, or resources to a church family?

A close-up photograph of several hands clasped together in prayer. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with fingers interlaced. One hand on the right has a diamond ring on the ring finger. The background is softly blurred, showing parts of people's clothing, including a white top and a dark patterned garment. The overall lighting is soft and natural, creating a sense of intimacy and community.

*God has given each of you a gift from
his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use
them well to serve one another.*

1 PETER 4:10 (NLT)

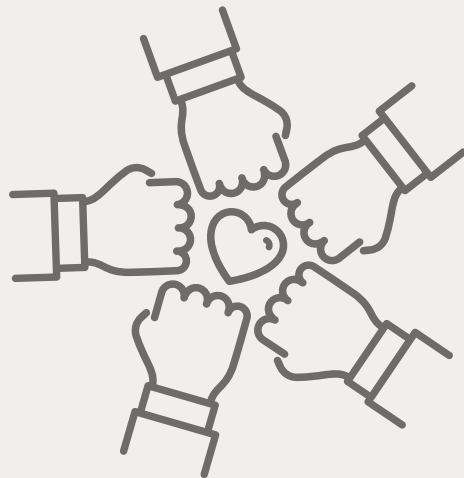
04

Each Family Member Has A Unique Role to Play

Each of us should actively be serving in the way God has gifted us, with our church family and in the world.

Committing to being part of a church family requires an active role from you as a member, to connect with a team that is facilitating ministry in our church.

Don't wait to be asked, initiate the process of serving.



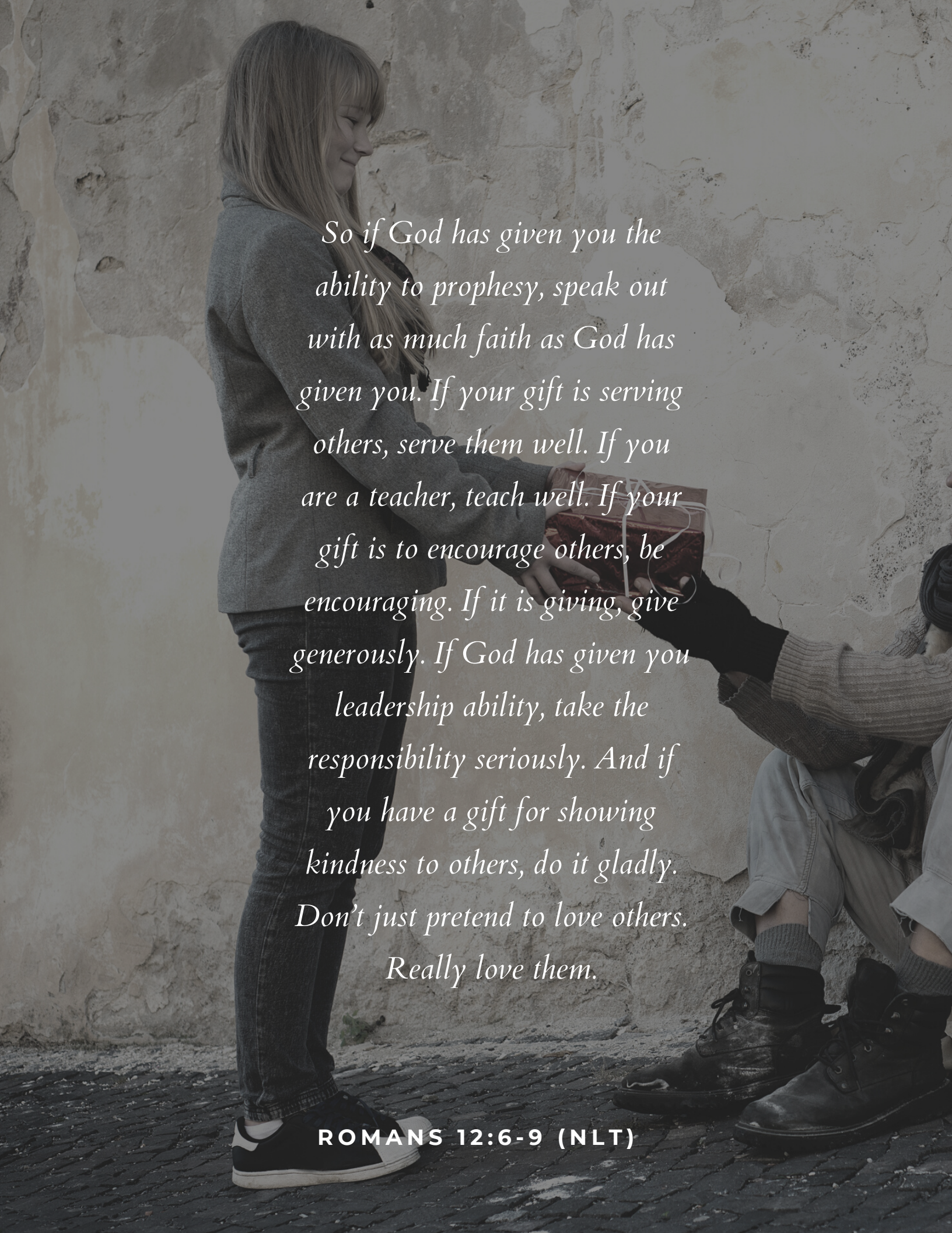
God entrusted you with His Spirit, to serve His family.



Reflection #4

What specific gifting do you have to help others?

Am you ready to commit the kind of time and energy required to be an active member in PORTICO's community?



So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them.

ROMANS 12:6-9 (NLT)



Interested in becoming a PORTICO Member?

Complete the Membership Course in the PORTICO Learning Hub,
and submit an application at the end, to become an official
member at PORTICO Community Church.

[PORTICO.CC/MEMBERSHIP](https://portico.cc/membership)



...so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart.

1 PETER 1:22 (NLT)

You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 (NLT)

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too... Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave

PHILIPPIANS 2: 3-4,7 (NLT)

To the church... we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 (NLT)

Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

EPHESIANS 4:15-16 (NLT)