

# Romans 12

We who are many are one body in Christ.

Produced by the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church to communicate effective principles and practices demonstrated by congregations that are actively making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

These congregations are marked by:

- Clarity around the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Practice of spiritual disciplines, both corporately and individually.
- Nurture in growth in discipleship through mutual support and accountability.
- Cultivation of intentional and mutual relationships with the most vulnerable—the poor, children, the imprisoned, the powerless.
- Consistent concern for inviting people into relationship with Jesus Christ, combined with wise practices for initiating them into the body of Christ.
- Connectional relationships that facilitate participation in God's mission of global transformation.
- Shared clergy and lay leadership.

## Engaging Faith

First United Methodist Church in Roseburg, Oregon, has moved from a variety of sometimes unrelated spiritual growth offerings to an intentional discipleship process that helps people deepen their walk with Christ.

The process, referred to as *Engaging Faith*, focuses on a seasonal flow of engagement with God, with one another, and with life. Each season a slate of opportunities related to these three emphases is offered to parishioners and others who wish to participate.

“Engaging God” emphasizes deepening one’s relationship with God through worship, study, and other spiritual disciplines. An informal, interactive worship experience is offered each week in the fellowship hall in addition to the more traditional service in the sanctuary. Goals and milestones are established for personal and family devotions, and the church helps people find appropriate devotional materials. Ongoing online sermon chats with the pastor and seasonal short-term classes provide opportunities for spiritual formation.

“Engaging One Another” focuses on knowing and encouraging each other as a community of faith. Some of the offerings include a book group, an interdenominational youth group, and Dine with Nine fellowship groups.

“Engaging in Life” motivates people to embody their Christian faith through service and efforts to transform the world. Members participate in a community food pantry, meals-on-wheels, transitional housing for homeless teens, Habitat for Humanity, and other ventures to serve the community. In months that have five Sundays, the fifth Sunday is known as Church Outbound Sunday. Following the worship service there is a church-wide project that moves the church into the local and larger community.

## Questions for Discussion

- Can you describe the disciple-forming process in your congregation in ten words or less?
- How would your congregation respond to a regular Church Outbound Sunday? How would it change people’s experience of worship? How would it change their experience of service?

**Kevin Witt is the Director of Camp and Retreat Ministries at the General Board of Discipleship. He can be reached at [kwitt@gbod.org](mailto:kwitt@gbod.org).**



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