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GRACE COMMITMENTS 2

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The Local Church, Part 2: A Safe Home for Kingdom People

ASSIGNMENTS

- Check JG member's progress on 21 days of personal worship. If struggling, encourage them to start over with goal of getting 21 days straight before the holiday break.
- **EQUIPPING** – Continue memorizing the books of the New Testament. Review the illustration and the "left column" (Pauline Letters).
- **MISSION** – Encourage your JG to begin the Mission section early in the week. Their assignment this week is to have a conversation with someone on their prayer list in order to gain insight into their needs and look for opportunities to make the gospel known through deed.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week and discuss how it relates to the **TRUTH** section.
- By now, everyone should have had an opportunity to share their spiritual journey and model a 20-minute time of personal worship using **PRAISE**. If not, you should make a phone call to anyone in your JG who needs an opportunity to complete these exercises. Don't let anyone miss the benefit of doing this in the JG setting.
- A few people may be ready to recite the books of the New Testament. Continue recruiting people to recite in the next two meetings.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – The material this week emphasizes that God intends the local church to function as a safe home away from home for kingdom people. When discussing this function of the local church, focus on these points:
 - The local church should function as a home away from home for God's people (the home embassy analogy).

- The spiritual benefits of belonging to the local church are receiving instruction and support in being an ambassador, training/equipping is specific ministries, and accountability for spiritual growth.
 - The responsibilities of members of the local church are to love one another and to grow spiritually.
 - Discuss the difference between members and guests of the local church. Are regular attenders more like members or guests?
- **TRUTH** – You can discuss any of the **IN BIBLE** questions with your group in order to clarify these points. Here are some tips that may help you:
 - **1 PETER 1:22-2:5, 9** – Peter reminds these Christians of the all important command to love one another. Keep in mind that the love Peter has in mind has as much or more to do with how they treat one another than how they feel toward one another. Christ loved people through active demonstration, not mere feelings. The experience of being born again through the living word of God, the gospel, enables them (and obligates them) to obey this command.

The command in 2:1 is a more specific instruction on how to love one another. The command in 2:2 to crave the spiritual milk (a reference to God’s word) is a command to continue in the means of grace that results in spiritual growth. This makes sense since it was that word of truth that brought about spiritual life in the first place. Peter’s purpose is to encourage his audience to pursue those things that will result in their spiritual growth, because God’s overall purpose is to build a spiritual house of worship, a people who offer their lives and hearts as spiritual sacrifices of worship.
 - **HEBREWS 10:24-25** – The writer is encouraging his readers to love one another and regularly meet together. Note that the stated purpose of their meeting together is for encouragement and motivational accountability (“...*stir up one another...*”).

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- **EQUIPPING** – Discuss either or both of these questions. One focuses on the value of membership in a local church. The other gives your JG members an opportunity to discuss any issues they may be experiencing with love and/or forgiveness.
 - **MISSION** – Allow time for people to share their experience talking with people on their prayer lists.