

Greet One Another

The One Anothers June 15, 2025

Last week, Pastor Gene encouraged us to give some attention to the “one another” passages in the New Testament. Not only would that be a great series for your personal devotions, we should consider them together. The whole point of those verses is to show us how to relate to each other in the church so that we can be Christians who are growing and a church family that is thriving.

And so, from time-to-time I’d like us to take a look at one of these commands so that we can be strong in the Lord together.

Some fundamentals to get us started: There are about 60 one another commands in the New Testament. Mostly they are *positive*, meaning instructions on how we *should* treat each other. But there are also *negative* one anothers, meaning how *not* to treat each other.¹

About a third of these commands tell us to *love* one another. Another third deal with unity in the church. Fifteen percent or so are about humility or putting others first.² Paul twice reminds us that we are to live out these commands not *only* because God asks us to, but because we are members *of* one another. That though we are many members, we are one body - the body of Christ.

Our relationship to one another boils down to agape love. But, sometimes it can be abstract to just say, “Go love people.” Well, what does that mean? Especially if I don’t *feel* particularly lovey-dovey at the moment, what can I do to obey the Lord and participate in this essential church activity?

This is where the various one anothers help. They give us real attitudes and behaviors to act on - real exercises of our faith as we allow God to conform us and bear fruit in us.

So today, we start with one of the most basic one anothers: *Greet* one another. “Greet one another with a holy kiss” is found five times in the New Testament. Let’s get the awkward part out of the way: The kiss isn’t a thing anymore. At the time, it was common to say hello with a kiss, specifically to family members, close friends, or as a sign of respect for someone.³ Some cultures today still say hello with a peck on the cheek, but it’s not an appropriate action in *our* time and place.

Actually, after the first century, the kiss part started getting out of hand and church leaders made rules that men would only kiss men and women would only kiss women.⁴

The point was not the kiss, the point was the kindness *behind* the greeting. If you’re saying hello to someone with a kiss, that means you’re actually connecting with that person. You’re sharing a

¹ <https://www.mmlearn.org/hubfs/docs/OneAnotherPassages.pdf>

² <https://overviewbible.com/one-another-infographic/>

³ Craig Keener *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*

⁴ *ibid.*

moment together - even if very brief - that is close and respectful and tender. A greeting that acknowledges our familial connection.

Now, if you're like me, meet and greet time is not the thing you look forward to most at church. Statistically there are a lot of people who get a little nervous about saying hello to strangers.

Even before COVID only 18% of churches had a meet and greet time during their services.⁵ And when surveyed, 58% of church goers said they really don't like it. And yet, both Peter and Paul said it's something we must do. And they said so *five times*!

Of course, we don't only fulfill that command during our "official" meet and greet time, but those couple of minutes give us a chance to honor God, to accept and welcome people around us, and to exercise our faith that when we do what God asks us to do, He will do a work in our lives and build up our faith and bear fruit in our church.

So, let me say I think you do a great job greeting one another, not just in-between worship and the study, but before and after service, too. But as we focus our attention on this command, by way of application, I have a few ideas for us to consider moving forward.

First, let's remember that our greeting isn't just a time filler. God says it has a spiritual component. It's a chance not only to share warmth and welcome to someone, but to remind ourselves that this Christian across from me, even if I don't know them, *is* my family member. And I can embrace them with the love of God with a simple hello and a friendly smile.

Second, as we greet one another, we should always try to read the room. Is the person I'm about to interact with giving me signs that they'd rather *not* have a handshake or a full on conversation? If you're getting those signals, a smile and hello are still appropriate, but maybe not a bunch of questions. Or, as you stand up and look around, is there someone who looks like they're *waiting* to be welcomed? Go greet them. It's ok if they're a few rows away, we'll make the time.

If you're greeting someone you don't know, think about what you might say. "How long have you been coming to Calvary" is a better question than, "is this your first time here?". "How are you doing today" might be too hard a question for someone to answer. Try out, "How can I pray for you?"

If you *were* in a culture where you greet with a kiss, you have to be careful so that you don't plant your lips on the wrong spot, right? Or so that you don't crack your nose into someone else's. In the same way, we should be mindful and watchful about the way we're greeting people here at church.

Third, if you're like me and on the *human* level would feel fine if the meet and greet went away, let's remember: God says this interaction is a meaningful part of our spiritual life. It's on the same list as pray for one another and serve one another and forgive one another. God says we need the welcoming embrace of our fellow Christians. So let's keep believing Him and act accordingly.

⁵ <https://churchanswers.com/blog/how-the-stand-and-greet-time-disappeared-in-churches-and-how-to-replace-it/>