

7 Marks of Vital Congregations (even during Covid-19)

Mark #6: Caring Relationships

Share in reading aloud the entire scripture texts and quotes below:

First Corinthians 13:4- *“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”*

Romans 12:9-21 *“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; . . . Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. . . . Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

“Caring relationships . . . provide a place where all people find freedom to share stories, ask for help, find identity, purpose and belonging, and confront conflict, embrace diversity, and seek to be peacemakers and bridge builders. Caring relationships moves us beyond “another social club” facades, hypocrisy, and judging others. -PCUSA Office of VCI

“Millions of missionary dollars have gone to Africa from the hands of church people who would die a million deaths before they would permit a single African the privilege of worshiping in their congregation. . . .I must not ignore the wounded man on life’s Jericho Road, because (they are) a part of me and I am a part of them.” –Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, Strength to Love.

“The truth is, despite the gospel’s claim the Jesus will be with us always, young people usually assume – correctly – that the church will not always be there for them. . . .”-Kenda Creasy Dean, Practicing Passion

Sample Reflection and Discussion questions:

- 1) Revitalizing requires adjusting to new circumstances.
What parts of the scripture and quotes leave you with more questions?" Are caring relationships more important to you within your congregation or beyond your congregation? How are those two types of caring relationships different?
- 2) Have any of your caring relationship changes since distancing began? How have they changed? How do you image our congregation helping to support our internal caring relationships during Covid 19?
- 3) If you substitute “homelessness” and “homeless person” for “dollars to Africa” and the “African” how does that change the reality of the situation?

bjc – 12/17/2020