

ENGAGE!

authentic | biblical | community

40-Day Devotional

By

Emmanuel Faith Community Church

Escondido, California

www.efcc.org/engage

Special Thanks

**Thank you to the following writers
who contributed one or more of the daily devotions:**

Melissa Bell, Michelle B., Josiah Cruz, Leslie Campos,
Cyndie de Neve, Andrea Douglas, Carissa Duran,
Cyndie Evans, Jaisen Fuson, Brad Hoadley, Nicole Jiles,
Chuck Klein, Ted Limpic, Chris Montgomery, Anna Nielsen,
Christina Reid, Josh Rose, Shane Sebastian, Darica Smith,
Scott Smith, Ron Sutliff, Tom Thies, Chip Whitman,
Bill Wiese, and Bonnie Wiese.

Also thank you to Brittany Aellig and those
on the EFCC staff who assisted with editing.

Engage! Devotional copyright © December 2017 by Emmanuel Faith Community Church. All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

ENGAGE!

authentic | biblical | community

40-Day Devotional

INTRODUCTION

Some churches are like a college football game that has 22 athletes desperately in need of rest, being cheered on by 90,000 fans desperately in need of exercise! While this popular analogy among pastors might be an over-exaggeration, it isn't too far from the truth in many churches — and may even apply to some who call Emmanuel Faith their church home. But is this the way the Lord intended for it to be? Even a cursory reading of the New Testament leads us to answer this question with a resounding, “NO!” God created us to be in community with other believers, engaging in relationships which are biblical and authentic, as opposed to just sitting in the stands and watching.

During the next eight weeks, we'll join together to study and discuss God's Word, and to share and pray together. Our end goal is to discern how Jesus wants each of us to be more engaged within His church. Will you embark with us on this journey we are calling “*Engage!*”?

Ephesians 2:8-10 sets the tone for what we are praying God will accomplish during our time together. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (NIV)

God has planned for each of us to be actively engaged in His work at Emmanuel Faith. We miss His good purposes for our lives when we disengage. Perhaps without realizing it, a decision to “sit it out” ends up hurting ourselves, as well as those to whom God had

wanted us to minister. Thus, a significant reason for *Engage!* is to help us stay aligned with God's will for our lives and church.

In addition to Pastor Dennis' sermons, video blogs and your small group, we are providing this daily devotional to help you think more carefully and reflectively about your own journey with the Lord, and your involvement here at EFCC. We encourage you to find a quiet place and decide on a good time to read and pray. It often helps to develop consistency by spending time with God at the same time each day, whether in the morning, at lunchtime, or in the evening. But regardless of when it is, the hope is that we will all spend regular time with God over these next weeks of *Engage!*

May God meet you where you are ...

The Discipleship Team at Emmanuel Faith Community Church

Lynette Fuson, Jeremy Johnson, Hector Morales, Scott Smith, Tom Thies, and Chip Whitman

God's Divine Community

"But now you have been united with Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 2:13 (NLT)

Observe

Read Ephesians 2:13-16.

Key Principle

God desires peace and unity among His people.

Understand

About a year ago, I had a meeting centered around the idea of community. That meeting greatly challenged me on this idea. Why? Well, community is an essential part of life. No matter where you go, or what language you speak, you'll find people interacting in some form of intimate community: with friends, family, co-workers, small groups, etc. It made me pause and realize how God models the importance of community in the Trinity, through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If community is so important, we as the body of Christ, should recognize the importance of the role the church plays in creating healthy, God-appointed community.

Paul shares in Ephesians 2:13-14 (NLT), "But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us." What I love about this passage is that the body of Christ is made up of many different people, backgrounds and languages.

Before Jesus' death on the cross, it was common for the Jewish people to look down on Gentiles, or vice versa, because of their

differences. However, Jesus died to save all of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles! As followers, we all come together, no matter our differences, united in the fact that we have all been far from God due to sin and brokenness. It's only through the saving power of Christ, and God's love, that we can develop a deeper community with those who may be different than us. That's the power of God's divine community, the church.

Apply

Do you see the church as a part of your community? Why or why not? Do you have a judgmental heart toward the body of Christ and its members, or do you love others well? What are practical ways that you can begin to be an active part of God's divine community, the church?

Pray

Lord, today I pray that You would challenge me to see my community as the body of Christ and that, regardless of the differences, I would love the church and Your people the way You love and care for them. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Psalm 133:1; Romans 12:16; Colossians 3:14; 1 John 4:11