



A FIVE-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Not a Location. A Connection.

Five days on what it means to be the church, from Acts 2 and the message.

ACTS 2:42-47 · PASTOR RHEMA EHIEMERE · THIS IS US, PART 1

THE GOODLAND CHURCH · SUGAR LAND, TEXAS

Not a location. A connection.

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.

MATTHEW 18:20

Pastor Rhema told us on Sunday that we have been trained to rate everything. How was the worship? How was the sermon? How was the kids ministry? Those are fair questions, but they quietly turn us into customers. And a customer visits. Family belongs.

Then he said the sentence the whole message hangs on: the church is not a location. The church is a connection. Jesus promised to show up wherever two or three gather in his name. Not in a building. In people. You can know where to park, know the songs, know the routine, and still miss the revelation.

So here is the question for today: are you in church, or are you part of the church? One is a place you go. The other is a people you belong to. Only one of them comes with a promise.

REFLECT

When you think of “church,” what picture comes up first — a building, a service, or people? Where did the consumer habit sneak into your faith without you noticing? Who are your two or three? Could you name them?

PRACTICE TODAY

Send one text today to someone from church. Not a plan, not a question — just a connection. “Thinking of you. Glad we are church together.”

PRAY

Jesus, thank you for promising to show up when your people gather. Forgive me for the Sundays I attended without belonging. Teach me the difference, and start with me today. Amen.



The same place you were hurt

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

MATTHEW 16:18

Pastor Rhema did not skip past church hurt on Sunday. He named it. Rejection. Manipulation. Betrayal — sometimes from pastors, sometimes from members. He said it is real, and that he has felt it too. If you have been hurt in a church, you did not imagine it, and you are not the only one in the room.

But then came the honest question: are you really hurt, or was your expectation in a place the church was never designed to stand? He told the story of Mephibosheth. The nurse carrying him dropped him, and he went lame. Years later, when it was time to be blessed, someone had to pick him up again. What if he had said no? What if God decides to bless you in the same place you were hurt before?

Toxic is different from imperfect. Leave what is toxic. But no church is perfect, and the moment you find one, you make it imperfect by joining. Don't let who hurt you disconnect you from who God sent to help you.



Sit with it

REFLECT

Where does church hurt still speak loudest in your life? What would it take to let God bless you in that same place? How can you tell the difference between toxic and just imperfect?

PRACTICE TODAY

Write the sentence down where you will see it this week: don't let who hurt you disconnect you from who God sent to help you. If the wound is deep, share it with one safe person or pastor this week.

PRAY

Father, you know the wound and you know the name of the person who caused it. I don't want to carry it anymore. Heal what was broken in a place that was supposed to be family, and give me the courage to belong again. Amen.



Don't forget your last name

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

EPHESIANS 3:14-15

Paul ended his greatest letter by greeting people by name. Twenty-six of them. Priscilla and Aquila. Rufus and his mother. Not “hello church people” — names. Pastor Rhema asked us to open Romans 16 on our phones and scroll it. That is what family looks like on paper.

Then he told the story of the security guard at the hospital gate. They would not let him through until they recognized his father's name. Names give you access. And if you belong to Jesus, you carry the family name into every room — the hospital, the boardroom, your own kitchen.

Cancer has a name, but there is a name above it. Depression has a name, but there is a name above it. Lack has a name, shame has a name — and there is a name above every one of them. Don't forget your last name.

REFLECT

Whose name do you carry into rooms this week — and does it change how you walk in? Paul greeted people by name. Who has God placed in your life that you have never actually learned by name? What are you facing right now that needs to meet the name above it?

PRACTICE TODAY

Learn one new name at church this week — actually learn it, and use it. Then pray that name in front of God before Sunday.

PRAY

Father, thank you for giving me your name. When I walk into hard rooms this week, remind me whose I am. And make me someone who knows names the way you do. Amen.



Fill a need, not a seat

God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:18-21

This was the part of Sunday where Pastor Rhema stopped being gentle. You cannot join a football team, sit on the bench forever, and call yourself a player. Church is not a spectator sport. A sixty-year-old man sets up the chairs every Sunday. Some of us have never served once.

He said it plainly: just because you are not visible doesn't mean you are not valuable. And the reverse — the spotlight proves nothing. God does not reward eye service. He rewards service. Your gift was given to you, but it was not given for you. A tree never eats its own fruit, and when a tree holds its fruit too long, the fruit rots.

Then the promise underneath all of it: God did not place you here to fill a seat. He placed you here to fill a need. Somewhere between the parking lot and the kids ministry, there is a need with your name on it.

REFLECT

What has the bench done to your faith lately? What do you carry that the church around you actually needs? What would serving one hour a month change — in you first?

PRACTICE TODAY

Text CONNECT to (832) 626-1515, or scan the QR code Sunday, and tell the team where you are willing to try. One team. One hour. Start somewhere.

PRAY

Lord, I confess I have been comfortable in my seat. Show me the need you placed me here to fill, and give me hands that don't wait to be asked. Amen.



Found people find people

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

MATTHEW 28:19

The best story of Sunday was told from the stage with the whole church laughing. A man walked into a barber shop. Got to talking. Got invited to church. Gave his life to Christ the next day. Then he saw the pastor's picture on the wall and called his barber in disbelief. Found people find people.

Jesus picked Peter's boat because he knew Peter would call his friends. He waited at a well in the heat of the day for one woman, because he knew that if he got her, he got the whole city. Heaven's math has always been one invitation at a time.

So the church launched a five-week challenge on Sunday. Not a campaign — a culture. One invite a week for five weeks. Your barber shop is out there. So is your Lamin. Somebody found you. Who are you finding?

REFLECT

Who told you about Jesus first? Have you thanked them lately? What makes you hesitate to invite people — and is that hesitation from God? Whose name came to mind while you read this? That is probably your five-week list.

PRACTICE TODAY

Write down three names. Pray over them tonight. Then invite the first one to Part 2 — a text counts, but a conversation wins.

PRAY

Father, you found me when I was not looking for you. Give me your eyes for the people already in my life — the barber shop, the office, the group chat. I will bring one. Amen.

