



The SIX Marks of Discipleship

from the early
church in the
book of Acts

Membership vs. Discipleship

The Early Church:

What do we know of the earliest church?

Plenty!

Book of Acts – The promised Holy Spirit, Apostles, evangelists, the first “committee,” the ultimate purpose: To make Christ known that all things might be united in Christ (Ephesians 1:10)

The Early Church - Acts

The Holy Spirit anoints the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2)

Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life – only in Christ can we find salvation (4:12)

They shared freely within their own community of believers (4:32-3)

They held one another accountable (5:3ff; Galatians 2:11)

The Early Church

Pastors as ministers of the Word, ministers of prayer, delegating tasks to others (the first committee) (6:1-4; Paul – 9:20)

Devotion to prayer (1:14; 10:9; 13:3; 14:21-23)

Devotion to Worship (13:2; 16:25)

Devotion to Scripture (13:46-48; 28:31)

The Membership (chaplaincy) model today

Consider a recent survey:

91% of all households have at least one Bible

80% of adults name the Bible as the most influential book in history

38% of adults read the Bible in a given week

25% of adults volunteer in a church in a given week



The result?

Biblical illiteracy is at an all time high, and yet the Bible is still the #1 best seller of all time. There is easier access to the word of God today than ever before!

What in the world is going on?

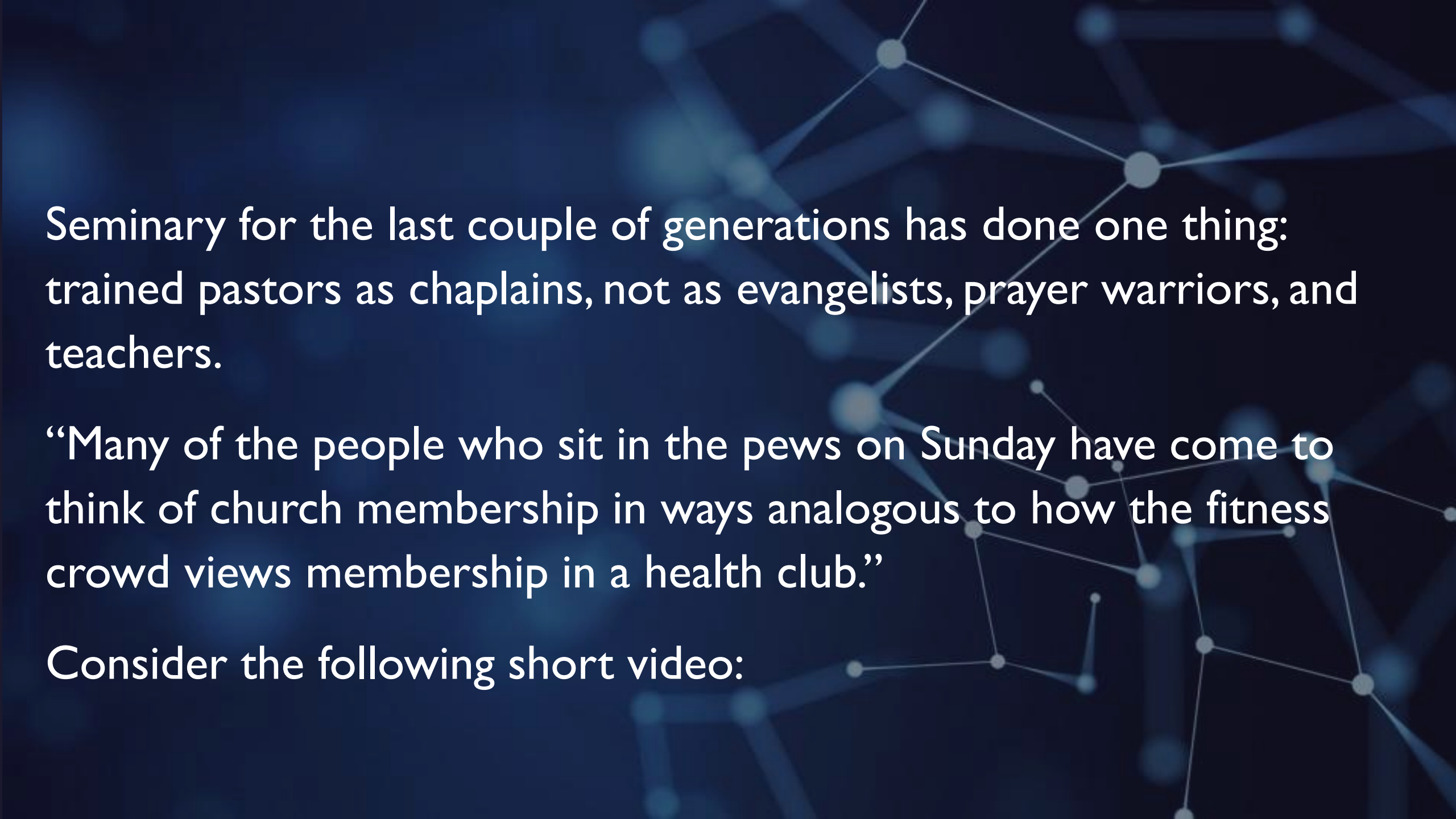
The membership model explained...

“most mainline and established churches are dying because they only try to take care of their members. Three out of four will close over the next 25-30 years...”

- Bill Easum

“We are long overdue for a paradigm shift in American Protestantism – a shift from a ‘membership’ model of church affiliation to a ‘discipleship’ model.”

- Rev. Michael Foss



Seminary for the last couple of generations has done one thing: trained pastors as chaplains, not as evangelists, prayer warriors, and teachers.

“Many of the people who sit in the pews on Sunday have come to think of church membership in ways analogous to how the fitness crowd views membership in a health club.”

Consider the following short video:

Igniter Media Video

“Cruise Ship Vs. Battleship” Plays here.

Due to copyright restrictions, video is linked separately





-Membership = maintenance.

-Greatest weakness = loss of vision for mission: the church's mission handed to us by the apostles

-Families, individuals, (even clergy!) used own agendas for one reason: control.

How do we go from membership to Discipleship?

If you tell it, they will come”

Our core values (including the four core values of the NALC) focus us outwards, not inwards. Membership turns our focus inward, not outward, which is, oddly enough, the definition of sin.

What letter is in the middle of S-I-N?

The Six Biblical habits of a Disciple

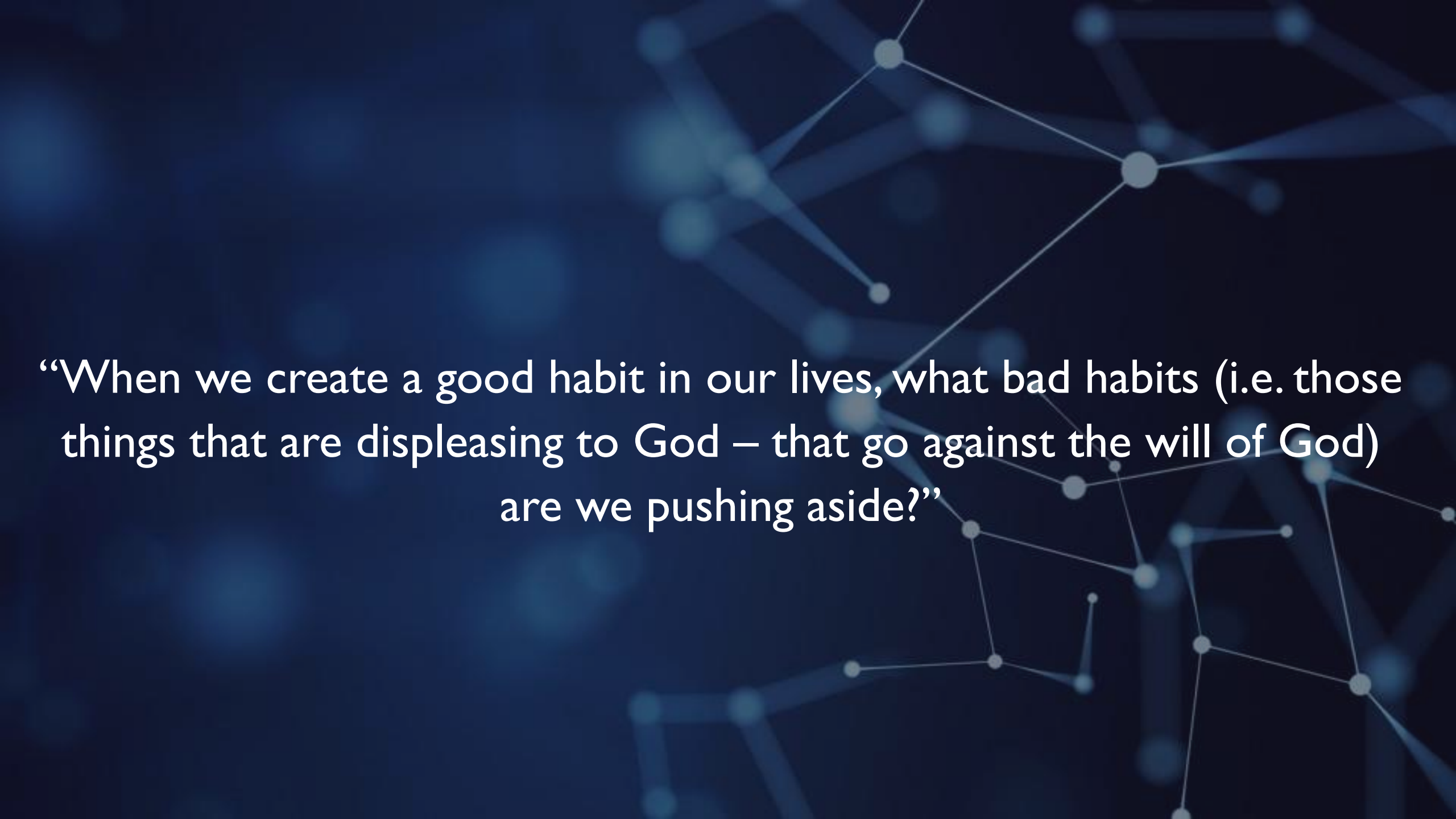
- ⦿ Praying Daily (It was good enough for Jesus...)
- ⦿ Worshiping Weekly (Liber Usualis, The Divine Office)
- ⦿ Reading the Bible regularly (we've all got copies, right?)
- ⦿ Service/Sharing the Gospel (there's always a need)
- ⦿ Relating within our Christian community (we are all sinners and we all have the duty to hold one another accountable...)
- ⦿ Giving Generously of the 3 "T's" (remember what we have first been given... and the fourth "T:" Testimony!)



Membership is about getting; Discipleship is about giving.

Membership is about dues; Discipleship is about stewardship.

Membership is about belonging to a select group with its privileges and prerogatives; Discipleship is about changing and shaping lives by the grace of God.



“When we create a good habit in our lives, what bad habits (i.e. those things that are displeasing to God – that go against the will of God) are we pushing aside?”