August 16, 2026

ON THE WAY TOGETHER

Finding & Extending Belonging in Jesus' Family

SERMON: Practicing Belonging
SPEAKER: Pastor Pete
CORE SCRIPTURE: Colossians 3:10-17

WATCH SERMON | SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMARY

Pastor Pete continued our series **"Finding and Extending Belonging in Jesus' Family"** by exploring how we practice belonging in three key areas: **within the church, to outsiders who come to us**, and in **our neighbourhoods**. He emphasized that practices flow from formation—we must intentionally be formed into Christ's image rather than passively allowing the world to shape us. Using Colossians 3, Pastor Pete showed how Paul called the church to "put on" Christ-like attributes and break down divisions. He challenged the traditional "Behave, Believe, Belong" model, flipping it to "Belong, Believe, Become"—just as Jesus did with Zacchaeus. The sermon concluded with practical tools: having eyes to see others, remembering what it feels like not to belong, and recognizing that small acts have big impacts.

SHARE

Think of a time when someone made you feel like you truly belonged—maybe through a simple gesture or welcoming word. What did they do, and how did it impact you?

READ

Read **Colossians 3:10-17** together out loud as a group.

DISCUSS

Feel free to pick/choose what is most helpful for you. Remember the goal is to have rich, relational, authentic, Jesus-centered discussions.

1. What stood out to you the most about the sermon?

2. In Colossians 3:11, Paul writes that *"there is no Jew or Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave or free."* What does this statement reveal about God's character and the nature of the kingdom of God? How does this theological reality challenge common human patterns of forming community based on similarity or status?

3. Pastor Pete emphasized that formation requires intentionality—that a passive posture means we'll be formed by the world instead of by Christ. What are some ways the world forms our understanding of belonging (think: echo chambers, tribalism, popularity)? Where do you see yourself needing to be more intentional about being formed by Jesus?

4. Look again at Colossians 3:12-14. Paul lists specific attributes: *"tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."* He then adds, "make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you." How do these practices only work in close proximity? What does this teach us about the cost and reward of true belonging within the church?

5. Pastor Pete shared the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) as an example of "reverse-belonging"—Jesus saying *"I belong in your life."* How does this encounter demonstrate the "Belong, Believe, Become" model? How might we practice this kind of reverse-belonging in our neighbourhoods and workplaces?

6. Pastor Pete shared a personal story about being turned away from youth group and later finding belonging when a new youth pastor made sure he knew he belonged. Can you think of someone in your life—at work, in your neighbourhood, or even at church—who might be searching for belonging? What small act could you take this week to help them feel seen?

7. How can our small group intentionally practice the three acts of belonging Pastor Pete outlined: belonging within the church, to the outsider, and in our neighbourhoods?

NEXT STEPS

- **Have Eyes to See:** This week, intentionally look for someone who seems like they don't belong—at church, at work, in your neighbourhood. Learn their name and greet them warmly.
- **Remember Your Story:** Reflect on a time when you felt like an outsider. Let that memory shape how you extend belonging to others with kindness and patience.
- **Start Small:** Choose one of the attributes from Colossians 3:12-14 (mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience) and ask the Holy Spirit to help you practice it intentionally this week.

PRAY

Take time to pray together as a group.

- Begin by thanking God for the gift of belonging to Him and to one another.
- Ask the Lord to form you into the image of Christ, clothing you with mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.
- Pray for eyes to see those around you who are searching for belonging—whether in your church, your workplace, or your neighbourhood.
- Ask God to give you courage to take small steps to extend belonging this week.
- Pray for any specific people or situations that came up during your discussion.

CONNECT

Be on the lookout for opportunities through **The Hub** where your group can come alongside others and extend belonging in practical ways—whether through **serving** together, attending community **events**, or connecting with newcomers at Cornerstone.

CLOSING

"Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." — Colossians 3:12