

## The desire to belong

Romans 14:5-13 and Matthew 11:25-30

### Romans 14:5-13

<sup>5</sup> One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. <sup>6</sup> Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. <sup>7</sup> For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. <sup>8</sup> If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. <sup>9</sup> For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. <sup>10</sup> You, then, why do you judge your (Christian) brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. <sup>11</sup> It is written:

"As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God."

<sup>12</sup> So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.

Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

### Matthew 11:25-30

<sup>25</sup> At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. <sup>26</sup> Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. <sup>27</sup> "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

**Agree or disagree?**

**What do we mean?**

**Why do we desire to belong?**

**What does the Bible say about it for us Christians?**

**What does it mean for our relationship with others in the church?**

## A Bible Study

### Pray:

Heavenly Father, help us to be considerate of each other and aware of others needs as well as our own. Help us to feel safe and confident to be self-aware. Give us faith to receive your word, understanding to know what it means and the willingness to put it into practice. May knowing you, and being known by you, be of great comfort and reassurance to us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### Each of you share. As you do, listen to each other without comment:

- *Belonging = To be together with other human beings, united in a common belief, interest, values, responsibilities, cause or task is a desire of every human being.* Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- What do you observe about people's desire to belong? What good things arise from it and sadly, unfortunate things?

### Be self-aware.

- What do you observe about yourself and your desire to belong? With 'whom' and about 'what' do you find you belong?

**Read:** Romans 14:5-13 and Matthew 11:25-30

### Ask and answer:

- What do you learn about the need to belong from these two passages? (For example: What good and unfortunate things arise from our need to belong? Where does the Christian ultimately find their "belonging"? How does that meet our need?)
- What are we told to do when we find our needs for belonging clash?
- Think about what we do when we meet for church; for example the words in our Creeds. How are they an expression of our "belonging"?

### Close with a prayer.