

THEREFORE

A BIBLE STUDY ON EPHESIANS 4:1-6

BY: REV. STEVE MANSKAR

FRAGMENT 7: THE CHURCH MUST BREATHE

If the church is like a body, as it says in 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, then it needs to breathe. The Holy Spirit is the breath the church takes in through worship, prayer and sacrament. The church exhales the Holy Spirit when it joins God's mission of shalom in the world God loves. The church needs to always remember that worship and mission are at the heart of its identity and not programs designed to attract members.

FOLLOW ALONG:

Watch the seventh fragment of Steve Manskar's Bible study and fill in the _____.

The body needs to _____ and _____ if it is to live and grow.

The _____ God gives is expressed in the lives of the people of the church.

STRETCH IN THE SPIRIT:

Practice contemplation. Make yourself comfortable and practice deep breathing, making your inhalations the same length as your exhalations. Clear your thoughts. Gradually, as you inhale, focus on one thing you want to attract more of into your life. As you exhale, focus on one thing you want to remove from your life. Do this for a few minutes. Then clear your thoughts again and open yourself up, in the stillness, to listening for God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. How is your spiritual breath? What are you breathing in that nurtures your soul? What are you exhaling that nurtures the world?
2. God gave us all unique gifts – do you feel more drawn to worship and prayer, or mission and ministry? What steps might you take to step outside your comfort zone to expand and balance the inhalations and exhalations of your faith?
3. How does attempting to grow and attract new members get in your church's way of practicing discipleship? What steps might be taken to realign the leadership and congregation to ensure it is in step with God's will.

