Planted to Bear Fruit Q&A Guide

Oct 6, 2026

About this guide: anyone is welcome to use this guide, including members of the Intercessor Church Community Groups. Read it before class or on your own so you come prepared and well versed in the passage. It follows the Discover section of the group outline, section by section. For each question it gathers what trusted commentaries and the ICCEC Catechism say, then adds a Summary that pulls them together.

How to read this guide: each question is labeled to match the outline, so A1 is the first question in section A, A2 is the second, and so on. The questions are written for this guide. Each one covers the same ground as the matching outline question and takes it a step further. The linked passage after each question is the one the outline points to, so you can click it and read it in class. Anything after the word "also" is a wider range or an extra passage this guide adds. Every line under Commentary and ICCEC Catechism is quoted word for word from the source named in parentheses after it. The **Summary** under each question is written for this guide, drawing on those quotes and the other sources listed at the end. Scripture quoted in the summaries is from the New King James Version, and Q-numbers are question numbers in the ICCEC Catechism.

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This guide follows the Intercessor Church Community Group outline "Rooted Together, Week 1: Planted to Bear Fruit."

A. The Vineyard Belongs to God (Matthew 21:33-36)

A1. The owner planted, fenced, and equipped the vineyard before leasing it out. What did he provide, and what did he have every right to expect in return? (Matthew 21:33-36)

Commentary

- "For what pertained to the husbandmen, He Himself did, the hedging it round about, the planting the vineyard, and all the rest, and He left little for them to do; to take care of what was there, and to preserve what was given to them." (John Chrysostom, Homily 68 on Matthew)
- "And 'He sent His servants,' that is, the prophets, 'to receive the fruit;' that is, their obedience, the proof of it by their works." (John Chrysostom, Homily 68 on Matthew)
- "The Old Testament often used the picture of a vineyard to speak of Israel (Deuteronomy 32:32, Psalm 80:8, Jeremiah 2:21, and especially Isaiah 5:1-7)." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 21)
- "His critique is not against Judaism as such but against those, entrusted with the precious fruit of the Torah and the Prophets, who have not given the fruit to God." (Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 21:33-46)

ICCEC Catechism

- "God's provision is our daily bread because all that we have and will have comes from His hand." (Q-239)

Summary

The owner did all the work of setting up the vineyard (planting, hedge, winepress, tower) and then trusted it to the tenants. All he asked for was his share of the fruit at harvest, and the tenants answered by beating, killing, and stoning his servants, twice. Jesus' listeners would have recognized Isaiah's vineyard song (Isaiah 5:1-7), so the owner is God, the tenants are the religious leaders (they realize it in 21:45), and the servants are the prophets. The fruit is obedience shown in action (Chrysostom), and the warning is aimed at those entrusted with God's gifts who kept the fruit for themselves, not at the Jewish people as a whole (Sharp).

A2. The tenants acted as if the vineyard were theirs. What is the difference between owning something and being trusted to care for it? (Matthew 21:38; also 1 Corinthians 4:2)

Commentary

- "This is required particularly because it is an office of trust; because the master's goods are at his disposal; because there is so much opportunity for the steward to appropriate those goods to his own use, so that his master cannot detect it." (Barnes' Notes on 1 Corinthians 4:2)

- "For they that had not to give when they owed, should not have been indignant, nor angry, but should have entreated." (John Chrysostom, Homily 68 on Matthew)

ICCEC Catechism

- "This commandment teaches that all the earth is God's possession and all things belong to God. God distributes the riches of the earth as He desires, and each person becomes a steward of those possessions." (Q-314)
- "Therefore, to steal from another is to steal from God. To honor another's stewardship is holy." (Q-314)

Summary

An owner has the final say and keeps the fruit. A steward does real work and makes real decisions, but does it for someone else and will give an account. The tenants' sin was trying to turn a lease into ownership: "let us kill him and seize his inheritance." The word for our role is steward: everything belongs to God, and He distributes it so each person cares for part of it (Q-314). Tenants with nothing to give should have pleaded with the owner instead of turning angry (Chrysostom), and that door is still open to any steward who falls short.

A3. If everything we have is on loan from God, which part of your life is hardest to hand back to Him: your time, your gifts, your family, your money, or something else? (also 1 Chronicles 29:14)

Commentary

- "All they gave for the Lord's temple was his own; if they attempted to keep it, death would soon have removed them from it." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on 1 Chronicles 29)

ICCEC Catechism

- "We must 'give up' (surrender ownership) of all our possessions, including time, money, relationships and resources." (Q-323)
- "The Holy Spirit empowers Christians with His presence for service and grants gifts for ministry in the Church and in the world." (Q-141)

Summary

This is an application question, so let the group answer first. Each area has its own pull: time feels like the one thing that is truly ours, gifts get tied to our identity, family is where we most want control, and money feels like security. The list of what a disciple must give

up names time, money, relationships, and resources, which matches this question closely (Q-323). 1 Chronicles 29:14 frames surrender as giving back what was already His (Matthew Henry).

B. Receiving the Son (Matthew 21:37-39)

B1. When the owner finally sent his son, the tenants killed him to take the inheritance. What did they really want? (Matthew 21:37-39)

Commentary

- "But they, neither by the multitude, nor by what had been said, were brought to a sound mind; they regarded not the prophet's testimony, nor their own sentence, nor the disposition of the people; so entirely had the love of power and the lust of vainglory blinded them, together with the pursuit of things temporal." (John Chrysostom, Homily 68 on Matthew)
- "The husbandmen treat the messengers in the most barbarous and truculent manner: beating, killing, stoning to death; highly improbable in the natural sphere, but another instance in which parables have to violate the natural probability in order to describe truly men's conduct in the spiritual sphere." (A.B. Bruce, as quoted in David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 21)
- "They caught him in the garden of Gethsemane; they cast him out in their Council in the hall of Caiaphas, and when he was led without the gate of Jerusalem; they slew him at Calvary." (C.H. Spurgeon, as quoted in David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 21)
- "As men treat God's people, they would treat Christ himself, if he were with them." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 21)

ICCEC Catechism

- "We are all sinners because our human nature is prone to choose selfish exaltation, powers and pleasures rather than God's will of love for Himself and for each other." (Q-100)
- "Historically Jesus angered the Jewish leadership because they saw Him as committing blasphemy by claiming that He was one with the Father and that He was the Messiah." (Q-112)
- "While He had the power as God to avoid suffering and death, Jesus became obedient to the Father's love, even to death on the cross, to take away the sins of the world, to reconcile us to the Father and to bring about our salvation." (Q-116)

Summary

The tenants wanted to own what they had only been lent, and the son stood in the way. The owner's hope that they would respect his son shows remarkable patience after so many servants had been abused. The tenants' brutality would be unlikely in ordinary life, but parables sometimes break with ordinary life to show truly how people treat God (A.B. Bruce, quoted by Guzik). Throwing the son out of the vineyard before killing him points ahead to Jesus suffering outside the gate (Hebrews 13:12; Spurgeon, quoted by Guzik). The desires underneath were love of power, vainglory, and the pursuit of things that do not last (Chrysostom), the same pull found in every human heart (Q-100).

B2. The tenants wanted the harvest without the owner. In what ways can we want God's blessings while pushing back against His authority? (also Luke 6:46)

Commentary

- "Christ here shows that it will not be enough to own him for our Master, only in word and tongue." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 7)
- "Those only make sure work for their souls and eternity, and take the course that will profit in a trying time, who think, speak, and act according to the words of Christ." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Luke 6)

ICCEC Catechism

- "In the first commandment God requires us to honor, obey, and worship God and Him alone, as Creator of heaven and earth." (Q-288)
- "We disobey the first commandment by the idolatry of putting any person, place, or thing before God." (Q-289)
- "The petition asks that the love of the Father for humanity and all creation be worked in us by the Holy Spirit, so that we are made into the image of Christ, who alone accomplished the will of God in his life, death and resurrection." (Q-233)

Summary

This is an application question. The tenants wanted the harvest without the owner, and we can want the same thing in smaller ways. Examples people often raise: asking God for help in a decision but not for His direction, wanting forgiveness without wanting to change, wanting a church family's support without the commitment, and treating God as a provider to call on rather than a Lord to follow. Jesus' question in Luke 6:46 puts it plainly. Putting any person, place, or thing before God is idolatry (Q-289), and that can include the blessings themselves.

B3. If Jesus is Lord and not only Helper, what changes about the ordinary decisions we make each day? (also Colossians 3:17)

Commentary

- "Do it all because he requires and commands it, and with a desire to honor him. His authority should be the warrant; his glory the aim of all our actions and words." (Barnes' Notes on Colossians 3:17)
- "Whatever we are employed about, let us do every thing in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in believing dependence on him." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Colossians 3)

ICCEC Catechism

- "Jesus Christ is called Lord in that He is truly God, for the name Lord is one of the names of God." (Q-80)
- "Because Jesus obediently fulfilled and completed the work of the Father on earth, He has now been given all authority both on earth and in heaven." (Q-124)
- "We must love Christ more than ourselves and all others." (Q-323)
- "We must follow Jesus no matter what the cost, even unto death." (Q-323)

Summary

Calling Jesus Lord changes the first question we ask from "What do I want?" to "What does He want?" Lord means the one with the right to decide, and the title rests on His being truly God and holding all authority (Q-80, Q-124). In everyday terms that can look like making room for worship, rest, and people before the calendar fills; giving first rather than from what is left over; choosing to forgive and to speak truthfully; working as for the Lord; and holding plans loosely. His authority is the warrant and His glory the aim (Barnes).

C. Christ Is the Cornerstone (Matthew 21:42)

C1. The builders rejected the stone that became the cornerstone. What does that picture teach us about who Jesus is? (Matthew 21:42; also Psalm 118:22)

Commentary

- "The ignorance and contempt of men are overruled by the great Architect." (Pulpit Commentary on Matthew 21:42)
- "The cornerstone, which stands at the base and binds together two principal walls" (Pulpit Commentary on Matthew 21:42)

- "We learn that Christ unites Jew and Gentile in one holy house" (Pulpit Commentary on Matthew 21:42)
- "The chiefest stone in the corner is called the head of the corner: which bears up the couplings or joints of the whole building." (Geneva Study Bible on Matthew 21:42)
- "The chief priests and the elders were the builders, and they would not admit his doctrine or laws; they threw him aside as a despised stone." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 21)
- "Though they reject Him, He is still the chief cornerstone, fulfilling the great Messianic Psalm 118." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 21)
- "We can be broken in humble surrender before God or be completely broken in judgment." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 21)

ICCEC Catechism

- "God vindicated Jesus by raising Him on the third day, confirming the truth of the Gospel." (Q-120)
- "The Church is one because she has one Head, Jesus Christ, and she is his Body." (Q-162)
- "The Church is called the body of Christ, the temple of God, the pillar and foundation of truth, the household of God and the bride of Christ." (Q-160)

Summary

The cornerstone is the stone the whole building depends on, binding the walls together and bearing the joints of the building (Pulpit Commentary, Geneva Study Bible). The builders, the religious leaders, rejected Jesus, but God made Him the cornerstone anyway by raising Him from the dead (Q-120). Peter later uses the same verse to tell those leaders there is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:11-12). Paul and Peter extend the picture: Jews and Gentiles are built together on Him into one temple, and believers are living stones. Verse 44 carries a warning: everyone meets this stone, either broken in humble surrender or broken in judgment (Guzik).

C2. Besides Christ, what do people build their lives on, and why do those foundations fail? (also Matthew 7:24-27)

Commentary

- "Christ is laid for a foundation, and every thing besides Christ is sand. Some build their hopes upon worldly prosperity; others upon an outward profession of religion. Upon these they venture; but they are all sand, too weak to bear such a fabric as our hopes

of heaven." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 7)

- "In a moment, health, friends, comforts may be gone. How desirable, then, to be possessed of something that the tempest cannot reach!" (Barnes' Notes on Matthew 7:24)

ICCEC Catechism

- "This includes seeking truth personally or corporately from any other source but God (such as fortune telling, spiritualism, secular humanism, materialism, hedonism, and the like)." (Q-289)
- "There are three principle sources of temptation: the world, the flesh and the devil." (Q-249)
- "When we ask for God's provision we recognize that He alone is the source of all that we have and desire." (Q-239)

Summary

This is an application question. Jesus' parable of the two builders is the natural cross reference: a house on the rock stands and a house on sand falls. Common foundations people name: success and career, money (which Paul calls uncertain riches), approval and relationships, health and appearance, causes and politics, and even religious performance, which Paul once relied on and later counted as loss (Philippians 3:7-8). Two of these, worldly prosperity and an outward show of religion, are named directly, and everything besides Christ is sand (Matthew Henry). Materialism and hedonism belong on the list too (Q-289).

C3. If Christ were truly the cornerstone of our group, what would look different in our priorities and in how we treat each other? (also Acts 2:42-47)

Commentary

- "The greatness of the event raised them above the world, and the Holy Ghost filled them with such love, as made every one to be to another as to himself, and so made all things common, not by destroying property, but doing away selfishness, and causing charity." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Acts 2)
- "It may be added that the effect of a revival of religion is to unite Christians more and more, and to bring those who were before separated to union and love." (Barnes' Notes on Acts 2:42)
- "But it is our duty to forgive one another, imitating the forgiveness through which we are saved." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Colossians 3)

ICCEC Catechism

- "The Church is a divinely instituted community of believers united by faith in Jesus Christ, and by the love and law of God." (Q-160)
- "As God is Father, so we are his children, and our relationship with each other is as brothers and sisters." (Q-224)
- "We must be known for our love for other believers, loving them, sacrificially and unconditionally, as Jesus does." (Q-323)
- "We now dwell in the Holy Spirit in many different ways, but particularly through the sacraments and his Word, by loving one another and through prayer." (Q-139)

Summary

This is an application question, and a good one to let the group dream about. The earliest church gives a picture: devoted to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer, sharing what they had, and meeting with gladness. Things people often name: Scripture and prayer at the center, quick forgiveness and honest conversations, no one left out (especially newcomers and those who drift), serving others together, and less comparing. The Church is a family of brothers and sisters (Q-224), and disciples must be known for loving other believers (Q-323).

D. A People Who Bear Fruit (Matthew 21:43)

D1. Jesus says the kingdom will be given to a people who produce its fruit. What kind of fruit is God looking for? (Matthew 21:43)

Commentary

- "And let us ask ourselves, whether we who have the vineyard and all its advantages, render fruits in due season, as a people, as a family, or as separate persons." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 21)
- "Christ knows who will bring forth gospel fruits in the use of gospel means." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 21)
- "such faith, life, good works, as become those thus favoured by Divine grace" (Pulpit Commentary on Matthew 21:43)
- "This is not the Gentiles as such (that would require the plural ethnesin, not the singular ethnei), but a people of God derived from all nations, Jew and Gentile." (R.T. France, as quoted in David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 21)

ICCEC Catechism

- "First the knowledge of the true God through right faith in Him; Second, a life lived by grace through faith expressing itself in good works." (Q-7)
- "Saint Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, kindness, faith, humility and discipline. The chief fruit is love, without which the others cannot exist." (Q-158)
- "The fruit of the Spirit reflects the holiness of God in our lives." (Q-159)
- "We must live in Jesus so that He may live in us." (Q-323)

Summary

Fruit. God expects His people to produce what His kingdom produces: changed hearts that show up in changed lives. Isaiah's song names the fruit God looked for, justice and righteousness. It is faith and good works produced by grace (Pulpit Commentary), and the question comes back to us as a people, a family, and individuals (Matthew Henry). The new "nation" in verse 43 is singular: one people of God drawn from Jews and Gentiles (R.T. France, quoted by Guzik), which fits the series title, Rooted Together. Jesus also shows where fruit comes from, abiding in Him (John 15:5), and love is the chief fruit (Q-158).

D2. Think of someone who is quick to forgive, generous, or welcoming. Where have you seen that kind of kingdom fruit in real life, in others or in yourself? (also Galatians 5:22-23)

Commentary

- "By describing the works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit, we are told what to avoid and oppose, and what we are to cherish and cultivate; and this is the sincere care and endeavour of all real Christians." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Galatians 5)
- "And it is not enough that we cease to do evil, but we must learn to do well." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Galatians 5)
- "Religion makes no one crabby, and morose, and sour. It sweetens the temper; corrects an irritable disposition; makes the heart kind; disposes us to make all around us as happy as possible." (Barnes' Notes on Galatians 5:22)

ICCEC Catechism

- "This is obtained through consistent self-examination, repentance, confession (sacramental if necessary) and amendment of life." (Q-273)

- "To be merciful is to love and forgive others as we have been forgiven and loved by Christ Jesus." (Q-270)
- "Forgiving from our heart injuries others have done to us." (Q-272)
- "These words absolutely require that we should bear no malice or hatred toward others but be at peace, loving all people as much as we are able to do on our part." (Q-246)
- "Showing hospitality to strangers." (Q-271)

Summary

This is an application question. Invite people to name real examples from their own lives or from people they admire. If the group needs a starting point: repentance looks like admitting a wrong and changing course; mercy looks like helping someone who cannot repay; forgiveness looks like letting go of a debt someone owes you; generosity looks like giving cheerfully rather than reluctantly; hospitality looks like opening your home and table. Showing hospitality and forgiving from the heart are both works of mercy (Q-271, Q-272).

D3. Pick one of those fruits. What could our group do together to help each other grow in it? (also Hebrews 10:24-25)

Commentary

- "Believers are to consider how they can be of service to each other, especially stirring up each other to the more vigorous and abundant exercise of love, and the practice of good works. The communion of saints is a great help and privilege, and a means of stedfastness and perseverance." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Hebrews 10)
- "Let us so regard the welfare of others as to endeavor to excite them to persevere in the Christian life." (Barnes' Notes on Hebrews 10:24)
- "But there is no danger that Christians will ever be excited to love each other too much, or to perform too many good works." (Barnes' Notes on Hebrews 10:24)

ICCEC Catechism

- "Counseling our neighbor in times of difficulty." (Q-272)
- "Praying to God for our neighbor and others." (Q-272)
- "The gifts of the Spirit are given to build up the Church as a whole, and as a witness or confirming sign to the world of the gospel." (Q-159)

Summary

This is an application question. Hebrews 10:24-25 gives the group its job description: think about how to stir one another up to love and good works, and keep meeting. Practical ideas: pick one fruit together for the month and check in each week; pray in pairs and follow up with permission, as the Practice section suggests; share where you have seen God at work since the last gathering; serve together, such as a meal for someone in need; and practice forgiveness in the group itself when there is friction.

E. Learning by Walking Together (Philippians 3:17-21)

E1. Paul tells the Philippians to follow his example and to watch others who live the same way. Why does faith need living examples and not only teaching? (Philippians 3:17)

Commentary

- "Not imitators of Christ in common with me, but be together, jointly, imitators of me." (Vincent's Word Studies on Philippians 3:17)
- "The word is peculiar. It signifies unite in following me. In accordance with the genius of the whole Epistle, St. Paul offers his example as a help not only to rectitude but to unity." (Ellicott's Commentary on Philippians 3:17)
- "He knew that he was not a sinless or perfect example, yet he was still a good example." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 3)
- "We need concrete examples." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 3)

ICCEC Catechism

- "We should read Holy Scripture prayerfully seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, understanding it within the life of the faith community throughout all ages, and with a desire to obey God's will in accordance with His ways." (Q-41)
- "Holy Tradition is the life of the Spirit in the Church lived out by the faithful in continuity with the prayer, worship, councils, creeds and teachings agreed upon by doctors and fathers who assist in interpreting Holy Scripture for us." (Q-14)
- "We must become like Jesus in all things." (Q-323)

Summary

Faith is learned by watching lives, not only by hearing words. Paul does not claim to be perfect (he says in 3:12 that he has not yet arrived), but he can still be a good example because he is following Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). The Greek word in 3:17 appears only

here in the New Testament and means imitating together, so imitation is something a church does jointly, a help to unity as well as to right living (Vincent, Ellicott). The same idea shapes how we read Scripture: within the faith community of all ages (Q-41).

E2. Think of someone whose faith shaped yours. What did they do, and what did you learn from watching them? (also 2 Timothy 1:5)

Commentary

- "Thus pious women may take encouragement from the success of Lois and Eunice with Timothy, who proved so excellent and useful a minister. Some of the most worthy and valuable ministers the church of Christ has been favoured with, have had to bless God for early religious impressions made upon their minds by the teaching of their mothers or other female relatives." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on 2 Timothy 1)
- "As well, Paul wasn't so proud to think that he was the only one who could be such an example." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 3)

ICCEC Catechism

- "Teaching the truth and instructing in virtue." (Q-272)
- "They are to proclaim the gospel in their homes, in the world and in the Church." (Q-203)

Summary

This is an application question, and a good moment to give thanks. Scripture is full of people who learned faith from someone else: Timothy from his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice and later from Paul, Ruth from Naomi, and Apollos from Priscilla and Aquila. One idea for the group: invite each person to send a short note of thanks this week to the person they named.

E3. Paul reminds a Roman colony that their true citizenship is in heaven. How should that change the way we live now and the way we encourage each other? (Philippians 3:20-21)

Commentary

- "Just as the Philippians could consider themselves citizens of Rome and were under Roman laws and customs (even though they were in fact far from Rome) so Christians should consider themselves citizens of heaven." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 3)

- "Just as the Roman colonists never forgot that they belong to Rome, you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and your conduct must match your citizenship." (William Barclay, as quoted in David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 3)
- "The form of the verb implies a waiting full of attention, perseverance, and desire." (Cambridge Bible on Philippians 3:20)
- "Christians must be so marked by their heavenly citizenship that they are noticed as different." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 3)

ICCEC Catechism

- "Therefore we are seated with Him in heavenly places." (Q-123)
- "'Resurrection from the dead' means that as God raised Jesus Christ bodily from the dead, so we too in Christ will be raised bodily with him." (Q-210)
- "Actually, the hope of the life of the world to come is already present in those who are a new creation in Christ Jesus and in His Church. We experience this in the sacraments, in our love for each other and in our finding Christ in the poor." (Q-217)
- "We are to live out the reality of this life to come now in faith, hope, and, above all, love." (Q-217)

Summary

Philippi was a Roman colony. Its citizens lived far from Rome but kept Roman law, customs, and loyalty, and Paul uses that picture: we live here, but our citizenship is in heaven, so our values come from home rather than from the "earthly things" of 3:19. "Eagerly wait" describes a waiting full of attention and desire (Cambridge Bible), and the hope that Christ will transform our lowly bodies is one we can repeat to each other for comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18). This hope is already present now, in the sacraments, in our love for each other, and in finding Christ in the poor (Q-217).

F. Making Room to Be Known

F1. Why is it hard to tell others what is really going on, or to ask them to pray for us? (also James 5:16)

Commentary

- "To acknowledge our faults to each other, will tend greatly to peace and brotherly love." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on James 5)

- "Christians, conscious of their infirmities, have a right to the sympathy and the prayers of their brethren." (Barnes' Notes on Galatians 6:2)
- "It becomes us to bear one another's burdens, as fellow-travellers." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Galatians 6)

ICCEC Catechism

- "We can be forgiven through the mediation of Jesus Christ as we confess our sins to God and to one another." (Q-243)
- "Hence, the penitent who receives the forgiveness of Christ and his Church is restored to righteousness and fellowship within the Body of Christ." (Q-187)
- "All can, some should, and some must." (Q-190)

Summary

This is an application question. Hiding is as old as the garden (Genesis 3:10). Common reasons people give: fear of being judged or of the story being repeated, pride or wanting to look like we have it together, shame about the need itself, not wanting to be a burden, and past hurt from sharing with the wrong person. Scripture invites the opposite: confessing to one another and praying for one another (James 5:16; Q-243). For deeper burdens there is the sacrament of Confession: "All can, some should, and some must" (Q-190).

F2. What would make our group a place where people feel safe and cared for? (also Galatians 6:2; Proverbs 11:13)

Commentary

- "The man who comes to us with tales about others will reveal our secrets also. Faithfulness is shown, not only in doing what a man has been commissioned to do, but in doing it quietly and without garrulity." (Barnes' Notes on Proverbs 11:13)
- "The law of Christ would not allow us to reproach the offender, or to taunt him, or to rejoice in his fall." (Barnes' Notes on Galatians 6:2)

ICCEC Catechism

- "By the ninth commandment we are commanded to speak the truth in all things, especially in what concerns the good name and honor of others." (Q-317)
- "The ninth commandment forbids: 1. lying 2. hurting someone's reputation 3. unjust criticism 4. gossip 5. insults 6. violating entrusted confidences 7. judging another's actions without evidence 8. publicizing the sins of another 9. perjury." (Q-318)

- "As ambassadors of Christ's ministry of reconciliation, they foster love and peace between God and man and facilitate reconciliation among persons on earth." (Q-275)

Summary

Trust grows when people learn that what they share is safe and that others will show up for them. Practices that help most: keep confidences, listen before speaking, correct gently, rejoice and weep with each other, show up consistently, and let leaders go first in sharing honestly. The outline's Practice section already builds this in: share only what you are comfortable sharing, and ask permission before following up. The ninth commandment forbids gossip and violating entrusted confidences (Q-318).

F3. How can we notice when someone is drifting away from the group, and what are good ways to reach out to them? (also Luke 15:4; Hebrews 3:13)

Commentary

- "And there are none, even the strongest of the flock, who do not need help of other Christians. Neither are there any so low and despised, but the care of their standing in the faith, and of their safety, belongs to all." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Hebrews 3)
- "This does not refer to 'public' exhortation, which more appropriately pertains to the ministers of the gospel, but to that private watch and care which the individual members of the church should have over one another." (Barnes' Notes on Hebrews 3:13)
- "Christ is earnest in bringing sinners home." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Luke 15)

ICCEC Catechism

- "Comforting the afflicted." (Q-272)
- "Visiting the sick, ministering to them, and if necessary aiding them in Christian preparation for death." (Q-271)
- "It is never God's will that a person should perish or be separated from Him and His love." (Q-215)

Summary

Start by noticing, then reach out personally and gently; the shepherd in Luke 15 goes after the one. Signs to watch for: missed gatherings, going quiet in the group or the chat, not returning messages, or a big life change such as a new baby, a job loss, illness, or grief. Ways to help: a call or text that says "we miss you," not "where were you"; asking how you

can pray and then doing it; practical help like a meal or a ride; a small invitation like coffee before asking them back to the group; and, with their permission, letting a pastor know if they need more care. This care belongs to all of us, not only to leaders (Matthew Henry).

Sources

Source	Where to find it
New King James Version (NKJV)	Bible Gateway
ICCEC Catechism (2014), cited by Q-number	iccec.org PDF
John Chrysostom, Homily 68 on Matthew	Bible Hub
Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 21:33-46	Working Preacher
David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 21 (includes A.B. Bruce, C.H. Spurgeon, R.T. France)	Enduring Word
David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 3 (includes William Barclay)	Enduring Word
Matthew Henry, Pulpit Commentary, Geneva Study Bible on Matthew 21:42-43	Matthew 21:42, Matthew 21:43
Vincent, Ellicott, Cambridge Bible on Philippians 3	Philippians 3:17, Philippians 3:20
Matthew Henry and Barnes on other verses	1 Chronicles 29:14, 1 Corinthians 4:2, Matthew 7:24, Luke 6:46, Colossians 3:17, Acts 2:42, Galatians 5:22, Hebrews 10:24, 2 Timothy 1:5, James 5:16, Galatians 6:2, Proverbs 11:13, Hebrews 3:13, Luke 15:4