

20.

Associate with the lowly.

Romans 12:16c

We all tend to gravitate to those who are like us. Some people just make us feel uncomfortable, so we tend to avoid them. After the Sunday morning worship service, when an opportunity for informal fellowship is given, do you normally fellowship with those you already know – or do you make an effort to reach out to people you don't know (and perhaps wouldn't ordinarily spend time with)? To build a *covenant community* we must make an effort to associate with those we think are 'beneath' us.

1. Based on Matthew 11:29, what did Jesus want His followers to learn from Him?
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The New Living Translation renders this “enjoy the company of ordinary people”. Having an ability to relate to others, no matter what their station in life, is one of the hallmarks of a true follower of Christ.

2. Note James 1:26 and 27. Based on these verses, what might you say to someone who is mocking how poor some people in our church or broader community are?
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The prophets foretold of the New Covenant where God would raise up *shepherds* for His people who would be different from those ordained as such under the Old Covenant (the Priests, Levites, Princes and Kings). The Lord declared that the Messiah would be in the line and spirit of King David when He established a New Covenant of peace with people. We know that Jesus was the fulfilment of this prophecy and that through His followers, these prophecies would continue to fulfilled.

3. What characteristics would these New Covenant shepherds display according to Jeremiah 23:4, and Ezekiel 34:11-16, 23-24?
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It's one thing to give money to the unfortunate but it's another thing to give friendship to them.

4. According to Psalm 41:1, what awaits those who takes the time to befriend and consider the unfortunate?

5. What is the greatest obstacle the most believers face when it comes to befriending *the lowly*?

6. Who constitutes the description of 'the lowly'? Discuss.

7. What application can be drawn from the story of Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37

May God enlarge our hearts to better *associate with the lowly*.

Amen.