

The Evangelical Covenant Church and the Ministry of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice :: A Covenant Resource Paper :: Discussion Guide ::

Background

A Covenant Resource Paper is a teaching document approved by the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church to provide context and clarity for Covenant churches on critical issues of concern in matters of faith, doctrine and conduct. A Covenant Resource Paper

- seeks to apply biblical teaching to critical issues in the context of the historical character and ongoing missional identity of the Evangelical Covenant Church.
- exists to inform discipleship and practice in the life of Covenant people without rising to the level of creed, confession, or binding doctrine.
- provides a uniform way for the church as a whole to provide communal discernment to those issues that are most critical in our journey as people who follow Jesus Christ.

This resource paper, *The Evangelical Covenant Church and the Ministry of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice*, will be voted on at the 126th Annual Meeting in June 2011. This discussion guide could be used in a variety of settings: leadership team meetings, small group bible studies, youth or adult education/formation gatherings.

Guide for Discussion

- What words or phrases come to mind when you think of the topic of compassion, mercy and justice? Has your understanding or your practice changed recently? If so, how?
- What, if anything, surprised you as you read the paper?
- Of the Bible passages cited in the paper, which seem(s) especially helpful? Least helpful? Are there others you would add?
- Discuss each of the “working definitions” for compassion, mercy and justice. How do these expressions line up with your understanding? What distinguishes each from the others? Are there metaphors that come to mind to further describe each concept?
- As you read the section “Covenant Historical Foundations,” where does your personal story intersect? What is the history of your church with ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice?
- Consider the section titled *Characteristics of Biblical Ministry*. Is there a characteristic in which your church shows particular strength? Weakness?
- How would you answer the paper’s question, “who are the marginalized, voiceless, oppressed and invisible in (your) neighborhoods, communities and cities?” How is your church serving them?
- What concerns or fears do you have as the church addresses this topic?
- What ideas do you have for engaging your church in reflection and response to this paper?

Share your thoughts. Learn the perspectives of others. Find more resources to engage.

By mail: send to Chrissy Palmerlee at 8303 W Higgins Rd, Chicago, IL 60631

By email: send to chrissy.palmerlee@covchurch.org