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# SUSTAIN THE CHURCH

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## Skill

Sustain the Church is a church leadership team intentionally cultivating a healing environment through worship, prayer, and relational reconciliation.

## Design

Sustain the Church (vineyard/gardener) > A gardener pruning a vineyard illustrates the heart for patient cultivation required of spiritual leaders. Church leaders must love Jesus' body and dedicate themselves to caring for and nurturing Christ's bride. The **sketch** is a fruit-bearing tree illustrating the pay off for faithful church leaders: a strong, healthy, and fruitful church family.

## Story

Fruitful Vineyard (John 15:1-17)

This story demonstrates Sustain the Church as a kingdom skill because we clearly see Jesus explaining His kingdom strategy for fruitfulness. The Father is the vineyard keeper, Jesus is the vine, we are His branches, and our faith and obedience are His fruit. Everyone wants to have purpose-driven and meaningful lives, so Jesus explains what He wants and who we must become to have purpose: remain in His love, obey His commands, and love each other.

## Scriptures

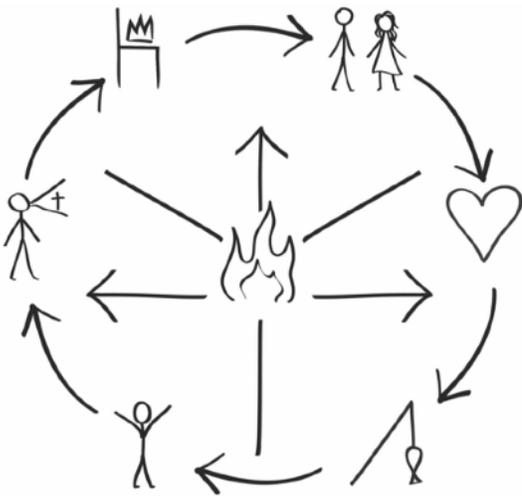
1 Corinthians 12:12-14 > As the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body - so also is Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. So the body is not one part but many.

Romans 12:10 > Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor.

## Lesson Summary

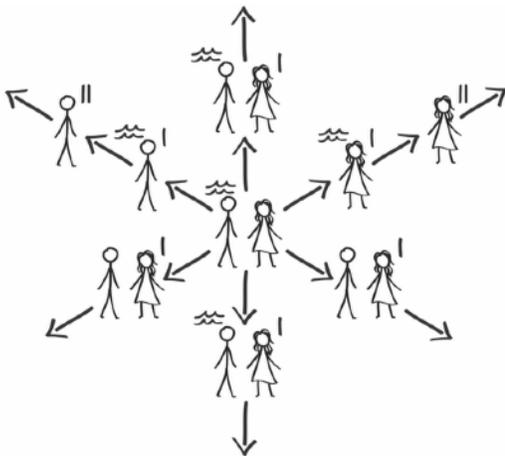
Sustain the Church requires much fruit of the Holy Spirit. Church leaders prove their integrity and compassion over time through many trials, challenges, and conflicts as they seek the Lord in desperation and serve Christ's body with unquenchable love (Romans 12:11-18). Church leaders consistently direct disciples in each church to Jesus Christ as King and Lord (Colossians 1:15-23). Jesus Christ builds His church through His people: He is the cornerstone, the apostles and prophets are the foundation, and every disciple is an equal part of God creating a sanctuary for His holy presence (Ephesians 2:19-22).

## Gathering Guide



- Holy Spirit (fire): Let the Spirit guide your meeting.
- **Step One** (back arrow): Last week questions.
- Abide (worshipper): How did you abide last week?
- Harvest (witness): Whom did you share with?
- **Step Two** (up arrow): Discover this week's skill in Scripture as you discuss the Bible story.
- God (throne/crown): What do we learn about God?
- People (man/woman): What do we learn about people?
- Practice: Practice telling this week's story in groups.
- **Step Three** (forward arrow): Next week questions.
- Abide (heart): How will you abide?
- Harvest (fishing): Whom will you share with?

## Generations Map



- People of Peace (people/arrows): Draw your disciples and their disciples. Share recent stories of how you and your team are engaging lost people.
- Baptism (waves): Update your map with those who have been baptized. What is the next step for each disciple who still needs to be baptized or become a baptizer by experience?
- Generations (number lines): Update your map with generations. How can we pray for this movement?