***A Church Called Tov*** **Book Study: Session #3**

***Discussion Sheet for* Chapters 5-7**

***Questions and Themes:***

1. “Choosing a church is choosing a culture, and the culture we choose will form us into the people we become. So rather than choosing a church based on who preaches on Sunday morning, or who leads worship, or what type of music we prefer, we would be wise to make our selection based on the culture of the church community.” p. 84 Spend some time reflecting together on this statement in light of your church.
2. What comes to mind when you think of goodness (*tov*) for your church?
3. “If we as individuals in the church will pursue Jesus’ *tov* way of life, we will help to create a *tov* church culture.” p. 96 What do you think of when you consider Jesus’ *tov* way of life? What does that look like?
4. “Churches that follow Jesus don’t simply take up a cause for one specific group; they develop a culture in which they hear the cries of all the distressed, all the wounded, and respond with compassion.” p. 104 What are some practical ways that you and your church can begin to foster empathy and compassion, particularly in response to the cries of the distressed and wounded?
5. “What we want is to be a church in which every person is equally valued as an image-bearer with gifts and abilities empowered by the Holy Spirit.” p. 107. What persons or people groups have not not been empowered to use their gifts and abilities in your church? Why do you think this is the case? What can be done to change this reality?
6. “Grace-filled goodness begins in forgiveness, forms into freedom, and resists fear - all because it knows that God’s design for the church is love.” p. 116. Which of these qualities does your church struggle with the most (forgiveness, freedom, resisting fear)? How might grace re-form the culture in ways that lead to goodness?

***Main Themes of Ch. 5 (Creating a Goodness Culture):***

* Big Ideas about Tov
  1. God alone is *tov* (God is and does *tov*)
  2. God’s design is *tov*
  3. *Tov* is active (something that happens, that is visible) (something we become by God’s activity in us through the power of the HS)
  4. *Tov* resists evil
* Jesus, the one true man of *tov*
* Creating a *tov* church by pursuing Jesus’ *tov* way of life.

***Main Themes of Ch. 6 (Tov Churches Nurture Empathy):***

* Empathy produces compassion
* Empathy is a posture that resists narcissism
* Nurturing Women in the Church

1. A church that is committed to developing a culture of *tov* will know the names and stories of women in the Bible.
2. A church marked by a culture of *tov*, empathy, and compassion will know the names and stories of women in church history.
3. A congregation dedicated to fostering a culture of tov will know the names and stories of women in their own local church history.
4. A *tov* church culture nurtures women as agents of God’s redemptive work in the world.
5. A church with a *tov* culture will intentionally promote the contributions of women on the church’s website and on the platform during services.

***Main Themes in Ch. 7 (Tov Churches Nurture Grace):***

Seven Features of a Grace-Filled Culture

1. Habits of giving are noticeable because we know we ourselves are the recipients of God’s gift of grace.
2. When grace forms the culture, forgiveness flows freely between God and his people and between one person and another.
3. Relational bonds of reciprocal grace form and begin to function.
4. When the fundamental response to God’s gift of grace is thankfulness, the receiver will reciprocate with active expressions of gratitude, praise and worship, love and obedience, trust and service.
5. The gracious gift of God’s *tov* makes us all equally loved and valued members of the body of Christ.
6. The gift of grace transforms us from enemies of God and strangers from one another into members of one big, grace-filled family.
7. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.