

# Everyday Disciples: Balancing Vocation and Accountability

# Join the Presentation



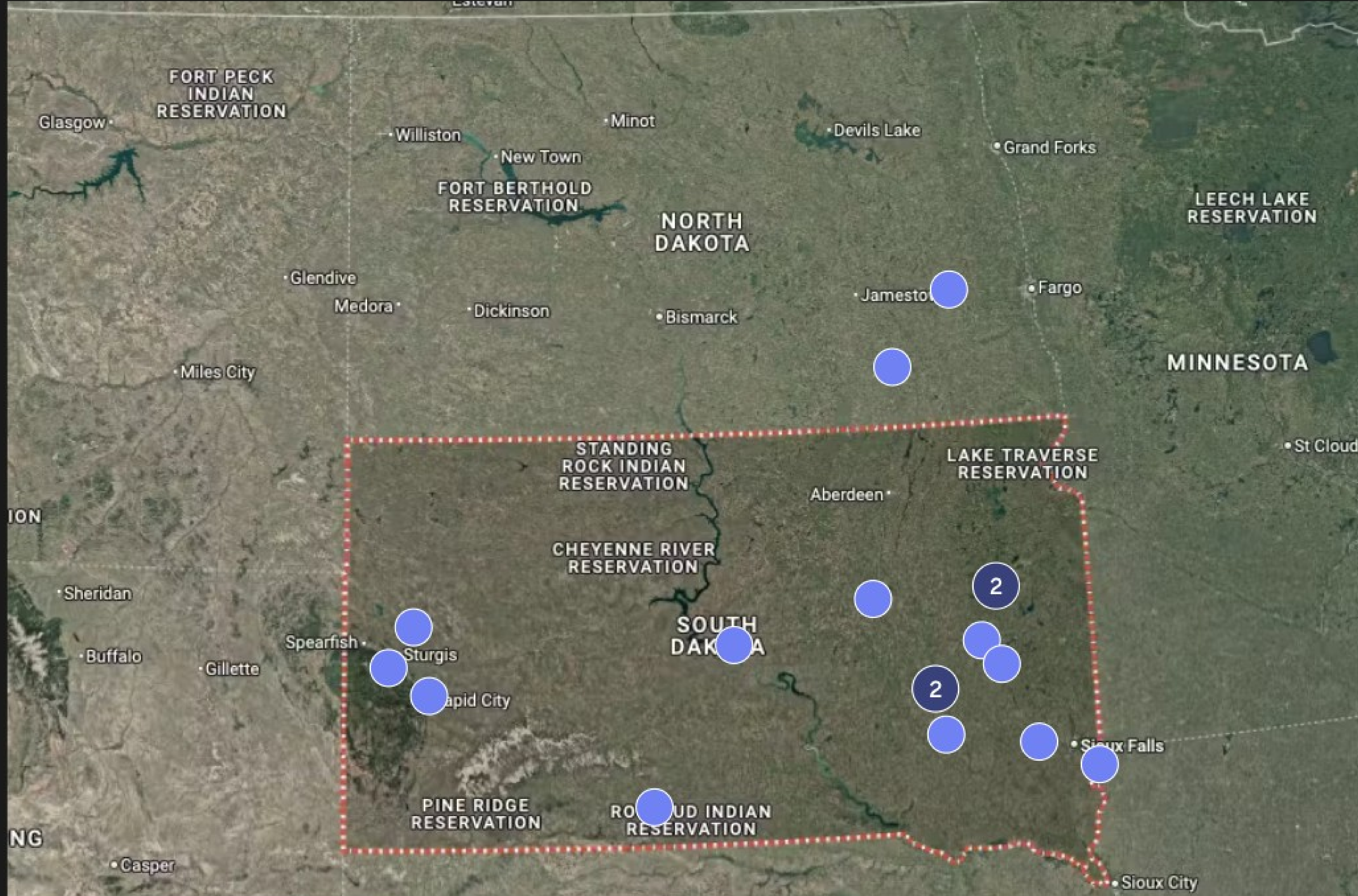








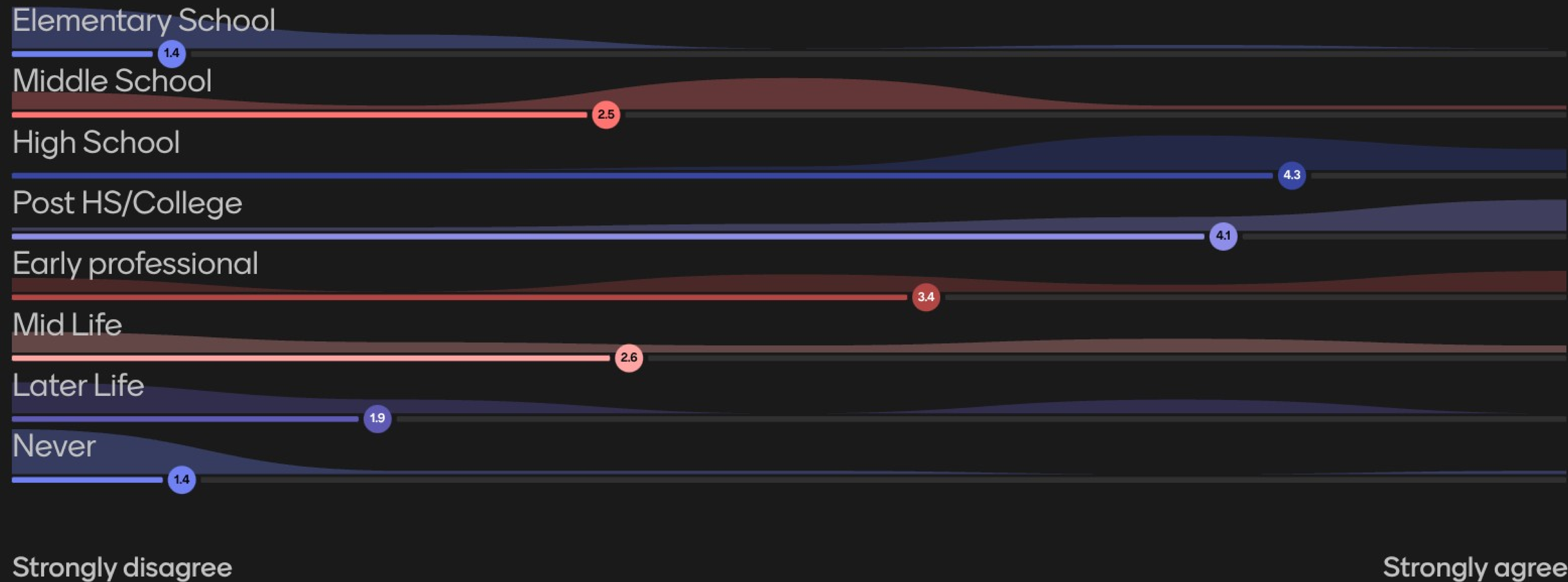
# Where in the Dakotas do you currently serve?





# Everyday Disciples: Balancing Vocation and Accountability

# In my context, we talk vocation during the following times of life:



# Membership & Activity Decline

From 1990 to 2020, the United Methodist Church saw a 31% decrease in membership . The Presbyterian Church (USA) experienced a 58% decline.



# Aging Congregations

Aging Congregations: The demographic profile of mainline denominations skews older. In the UMC, 54.6% of members are aged 60 or older .

Generation	Age Range	Birth Years	% of US Pop
Greatest Generation	97 and Up	1901-1927	>1%
Silent Generation	79 to 96	1928-1945	>5%
Baby Boomers	60 to 78	1946-1964	21%
Gen X	45 to 59	1965-1979	20%
Millennials	30 to 44	1980-1994	22%
Gen Z	15 to 29	1995-2009	21%
Gen Alpha	0 to 14	2010-2024	13%
Gen Beta	0	2025-2039	0%



# Disaffiliations

Between 2019 and 2023, approximately  
25% of UMC congregations in the U.S.  
disaffiliated from the denomination.

# Understanding "Dones"

**\*\*Many individuals leaving mainline churches are not abandoning faith altogether but are seeking spiritual fulfillment outside traditional church structures.**

**WHY??\*\***



# Perceived Institutional Irrelevance

Some feel that churches are not addressing contemporary social and personal issues effectively.

"Completed" purpose for attending (raised kids, served a project, etc)

# Desire for Authentic Community:

A longing for deeper, more meaningful connections than what is found in traditional congregations.

More than going through the motions

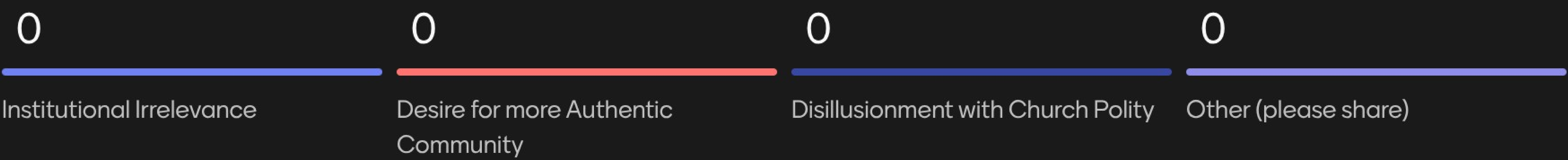


# Disillusionment with Church Politics:

Frustration over internal conflicts and politicization within church leadership and governance.

Burned out on relationships

Which of the mentioned reasons for "dones" have you witnessed your home church?





Many continue personal spiritual practices, such as prayer and meditation, but choose to do so independently or within alternative communities.

## What Are We To Do?

**Reevaluate Engagement Strategies:** Explore new ways to connect with individuals seeking spiritual growth outside traditional services.

**Addressing Internal Conflicts:** Resolve theological and political disputes can help prevent further disaffiliations and restore unity.

**Innovating Worship and Community Models:** Adapt to contemporary needs by offering diverse forms of worship and community engagement, including a balanced approach to discipleship.

# Small Groups

The model that John Wesley created encouraged churches to create smaller groups...

Each smaller groups within a church was designed to inspire relationships and accountability for church members to keep living godly lives.

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Group	Size	Purpose	Required?	Focus
Society	Dozens+	Worship, preaching, general support	Yes	Community and public discipleship
Class	~10-12	Accountability, basic pastoral care	Yes	Spiritual growth and mutual support
Band	4-5	Confession, deep accountability	No	Holiness and sanctification



# Small Groups: Societies

Definition: The largest and most general grouping in early Methodism.

Purpose: Gathered people for worship, teaching, and encouragement in the faith.

Membership: Open to all who desired to flee from the wrath to come and be saved.

Structure: Functioned similarly to a local church, often meeting weekly.

Content: Included preaching, singing, prayer, and general instruction in the Christian life.



# Small Groups: Classes

Definition: Small groups of about 10-12 people drawn from the society.

Purpose: Practical support and accountability in Christian living.

Membership: Required for those who wanted to remain part of the society.

Structure: Met weekly, led by a class leader who offered spiritual guidance and checked on each person's walk with God.

Content: Members would share how their souls prospered, confess struggles, and receive encouragement. The class leader collected a weekly offering to help the poor.

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# Small Groups: Bands

Definition: Even smaller groups (usually 4-5 people) organized by gender and marital status.

Purpose: Deep, voluntary accountability and confession of sin.

Membership: Optional, and only for those seeking deeper holiness.

Structure: Highly confidential, honest, and committed.

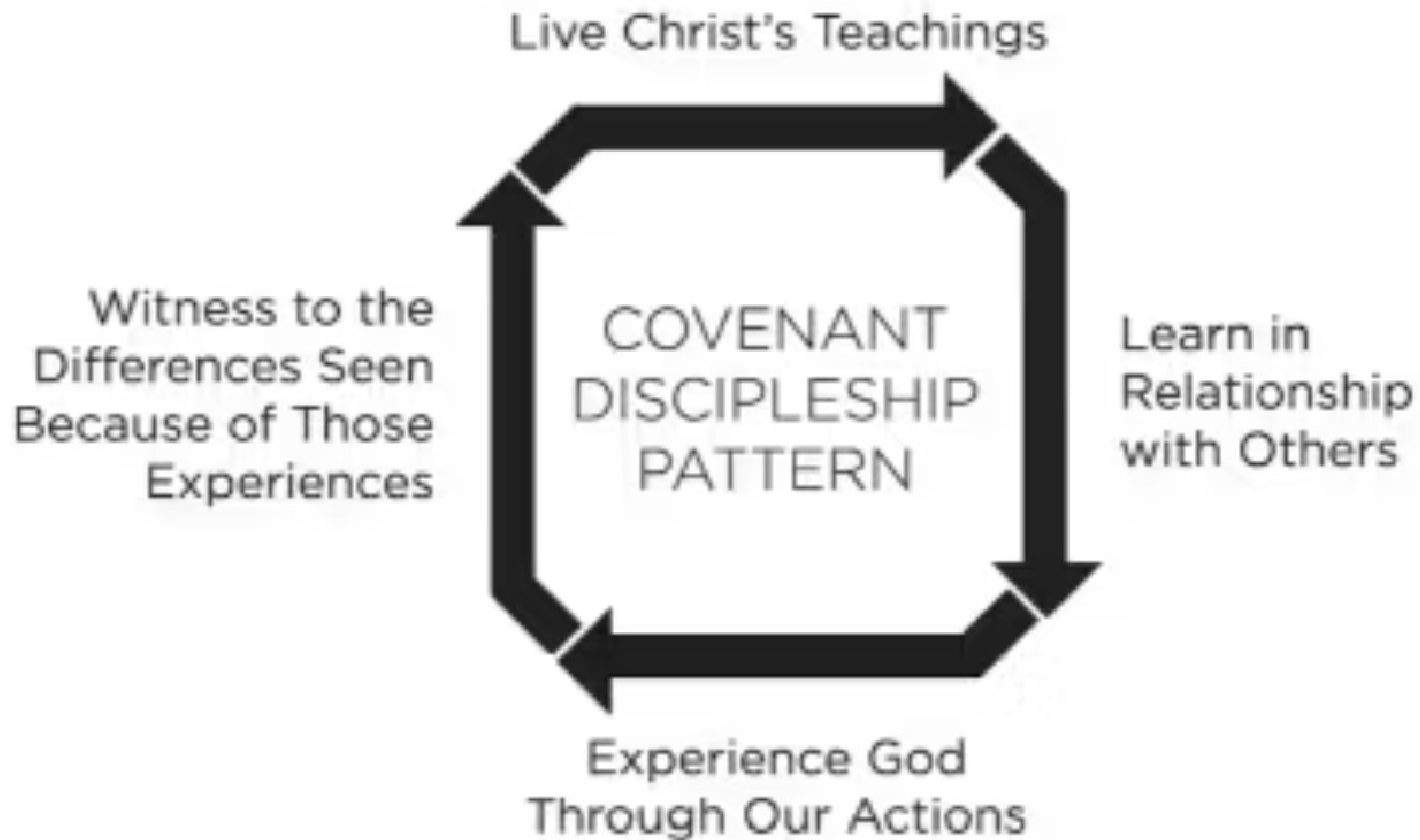
Content: Members answered specific questions about temptations and sins, helping one another toward sanctification.

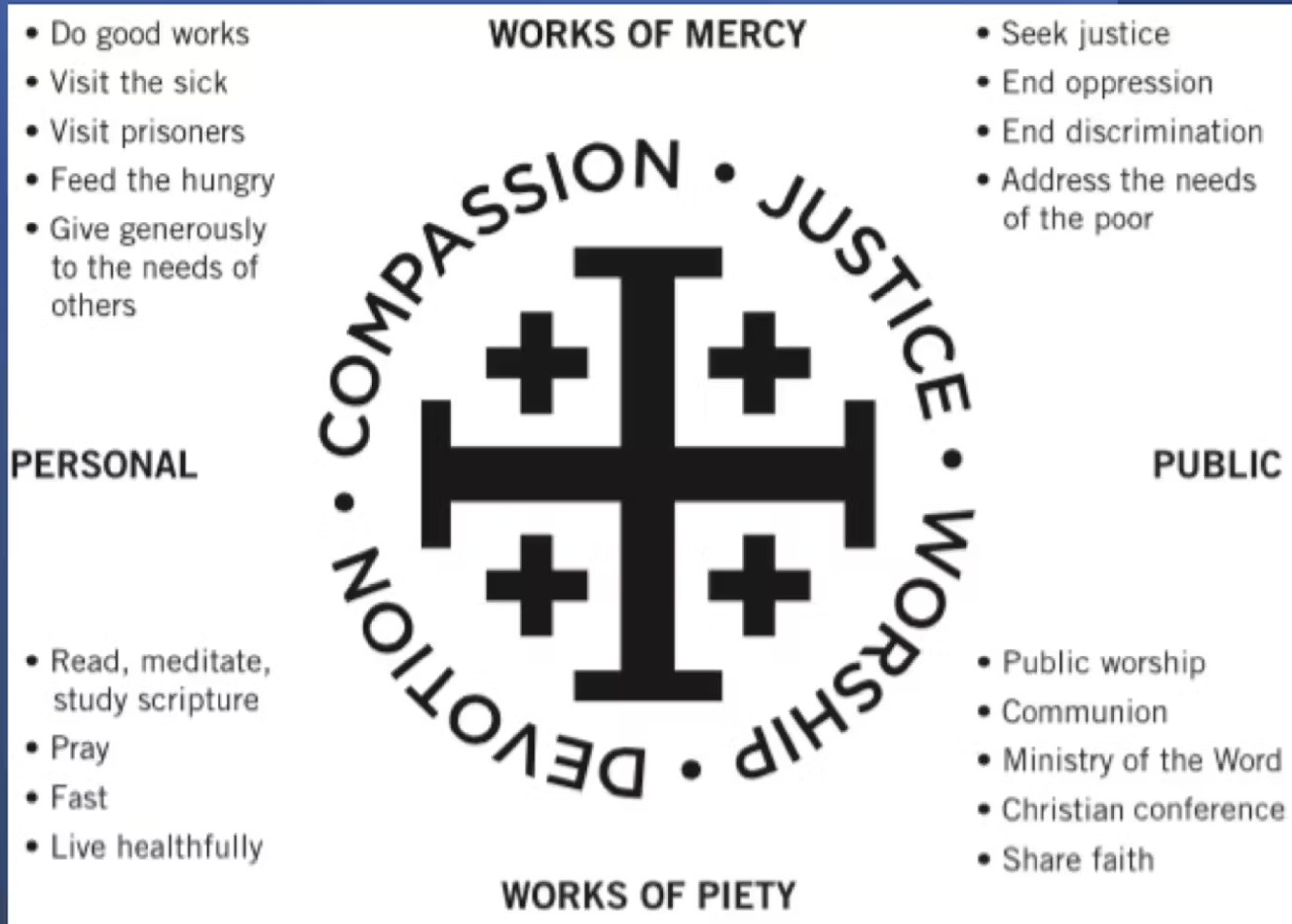
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- Do good works
- Visit the sick
- Visit prisoners
- Feed the hungry
- Give generously to the needs of others

- Read, meditate, study scripture
- Pray
- Fast
- Live healthfully



- Seek justice
- End oppression
- End discrimination
- Address the needs of the poor

## Public

- Public worship
- Communion
- Ministry of the Word
- Christian conference
- Share faith

	Live Christ's Teachings	Learn in Relationship with Others	Experience God through Our Actions	Witness to Growth
Acts of Compassion				
Acts of Justice				
Acts of Worship				
Acts of Devotion				



How might a balanced and accountable discipleship approach aid "dones" in your context?

# 3 Developmental Questions

**Identity**

**Belonging**

**Purpose**

# **3 Must Dos**

**Recognize Spiritual Maturity**

**Demonstrate the Great Commandment**

**Practice Theology**



# Contact

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# Evaluate Me

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