

Be the Church (Eph 3:10) pt 4 Do not neglect meeting together!

Church-Wide Prayer: Israel & Persecuted Church (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”

- Pray for peace in Israel as they face increasing rocket attacks by Hezbollah into residential areas in northern Israel, the ongoing conflict in Gaza and in many other fronts.
- Pray for the release of the remaining 101 hostages in Gaza.
- Pray for wisdom for the government and military in Israel as they face many decisions everyday.
- Pray for salvation of the Jewish, Palestinian & Lebanese people DREAMS, VISIONS, MISSIONARY
- Pray for protection (physical, emotional and spiritual) for all the people who are facing danger everyday, spending many hours in bomb shelters and being displaced due to war.

Ephesians 3:10 *...to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known ...*

RECAP:

1. **Church - the Family of God** - whether gathered, or scattered, is where we find BELONGING - we belong to God and each other, we receive FORGIVENESS from God and each other, we receive HEALING, we serve each other and discover our PURPOSE, we SHARE our possessions & money with each other! We find STRENGTH & ENCOURAGEMENT to keep going when things are difficult!
2. Highest call to the Lowest position – SERVANTS – Jesus modeled SERVING each other – calls us to SERVE – in fact, this is even how we LEAD – Jesus’ idea for how the FAMILY of God would relate to each other was through SERVING.
3. We BELONG to one another! First we BELONG to Jesus – SECOND – we belong to each other!

TITLE for Today’s Message: Do not neglect meeting together!

Hebrews 10:19-25 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way opened for us through the curtain of His body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold resolutely to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to spur one another on to love and good deeds. Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Our meeting together is the answer to many of the problems we are facing today

A. Problems the current Church is facing

There have always been problems facing the church!

- 9 letters written to CHURCHES by Paul
- 4 to individuals... but about the Church!
- Revelation – letters to the 7 churches!

Today the Western Church and global church is facing problems! We are going to look at some KEY problems that the simple act of us MEETING together as Scripture dictates, can address:

PROBLEM 1: Individualism & Loneliness – No one can tell you what is true, right/wrong, who you are, etc. FOLLOW YOUR HEART. **PRIDE!**

INTRO: My story: I still remember being 14... I thought, “the only thing keeping me from driving, drinking, smoking, voting, doing what I want, working, etc. was my AGE”

- **What. Went. Wrong? I bought into the CULTURES LIE – INDIVIDUALISM.**
 - Truth is relative. Truth is found inside YOURSELF. You can BE who YOU want to be. FOLLOW YOUR HEART.
 - I thought I did not need: 1. God 2. My family 3. Other people – especially the Church!

Where did that land me? THE PIG STY! Addicted, alone, fearful, anxious and miserable!

Individualism is at the root of another problem we are facing in the church – a pastoral shortage!

- People used to say, “what is God calling you to do with your life?” now, we simply ask, “what do YOU want to do with your life?”

Problem 2: Rising rates of anxiety, depression & suicide

Who’s to blame? Anne Traverse says family - “The socially constructed heterosexual, cisgender nuclear family is a key ideological building block of white-supremacist and colonial-capitalist heteropatriarchal societies such as Canada and the United States.”

- Therefore, here’s what Travers says about the schools: “The appropriate focus for schools should be on transitioning the school community away from the binary system of gender and finding ways to interrupt and change other oppressive dynamics.”
- FAMILY IS TO BLAME! And where did this binary construct of family begin? European Christianity – imported here. A system of oppression used to control people.
- I would argue, it is the breakdown of the family, the breakdown of our Christian society, that is leading to the increase!

Healthy families = healthy societies – despite what Traverse and our current media may have you believe! HEALTHY CHURCH FAMILIES = Healthy families.

Problem 3 Immorality & Impurity

- Immorality and impurity within the Church!
 1. Stats <https://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/15-mind-blowing-statistics-about-pornography-and-the-church>

TRUTH: “Religious service attendance is associated with greater longevity, less depression, less suicide, less smoking, less substance abuse, better cancer and cardiovascular disease survival, less divorce, greater social support, greater meaning in life, greater life satisfaction, more volunteering, and greater civic engagement. Compared to those who never attend religious service, they have found that regular attenders have a 29% reduced risk of depression, 33% reduced risk of death, 50% reduced risk of divorce, and 84% reduced risk of suicide. I find that last statistic to be staggering due to the massive increase in suicide in recent decades. Incredibly, they have found that declining religious service

attendance accounts for about 40 percent of the rise in suicide over the last 15 years.” STATS BASED: Jon Conway – Broken but Beautiful why the church is still worth it.

The Church offers the solution for each of the problems listed! But simply holding a service will not overcome the issues we are facing – we will have to BE the Church – the Family of God – meaning: we will have to function as the Bible tells us to function – the body only works when everyone does their part.

B. Three Types of Relationships needed to BE the Church

There are three veins of relationships that are critical for us to BUILD and work on if we are to BE THE CHURCH: (Mike Breen – stole his up/in/out)

- **Upward – our relationship with Jesus**
 - a. You need DAILY and regular time spent alone with God in prayer and then to live your life to obey and reflect him on the earth.
- **Inward – Church Family – We need to know & be known**
 - a. We need REAL relationships with people IN the church. It is within the context of relationships within the church that we apply knowledge of God! So that we KNOW GOD. We need each other for this. It’s not a solo endeavor!
- **Outward – Life ON Mission: Fulfilling the Great Commission!**
 - a. Invite others into the FAMILY – teach THEM to obey Jesus
 - b. We NEED the first two as a foundation for MISSION!
 - c. **1 Corinthians 15:33-34** Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good character.”
 - d. **We ERR if we have all our primary relationships OUTSIDE the church.**

C. Engaging godly community – Small Groups

BIG CHURCH: teaching, worship, prayer, serving, baptism, seminars, workshops, retreats, prayer summits! YES!!!

Small church (small groups): applying what we’ve learned, holding each other accountable, confessing our sins, encouraging each other, practicing the gifts together, eating together, doing life together, helping each other, visiting each other – KNOW & BE KNOWN.

Acts 2:42-47 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. A sense of awe came over everyone, and the apostles performed many wonders and signs. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need. With one accord they continued to meet daily in the temple courts and to break bread from house to house, sharing their meals with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail.

James 5:19-20 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, consider this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

- **One of our deepest human desires is to be KNOWN and to KNOW OTHERS.**
- **Ted Roberts said, “We are broken in relationships and we heal in relationships”**
- **Studies have shown. The deepest pain humans can feel isn’t physical, rather, it’s relational pain!** The pain of rejection, abandonment, loss, etc. these pains drive most addictions, and a lot of depression and anxiety!
- **I suspect that MANY of the moral failings we hear about within the church and society could be prevented if we engaged in relationships where we allowed ourselves to be held accountable, where we share honestly, held each other accountable and brought each other to Jesus in prayer.**

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Galatians 6:9-10 Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to the family of faith.

Church Relationships form the basis for healing, overcoming, changing, freedom, growth, healthy families and healthy societies!

They form the fabric which makes up what we call the FAMILY OF GOD. This is critical for MISSION And according to Hebrews – we NEED THEM MORE the DARKER THINGS GET!

Inward - Small Groups (Church Community):

- **Serve each other** – lost your job, someone is sick, relational problems, struggles, etc. the GROUP – how can we help you?
- **Worship & Prayer** – BIG C is great! But gathering with believers, friends, family and worshipping together? Singing! Praying for individual needs! WOW!
- **Word** – read, obey & share – small groups is where we can practice this together! And hold each other accountable!
- **Accountability** – confess sins, share insecurities & weakness, challenge each other in our obedience steps, deal with past hurts, KNOW & BE KNOWN!

D. Prayerfully consider: Are you an ACTIVE part of your Church Family? (Worship begin) FINAL SONG

Are you currently in a small group?

- if so, are you an active participant? observer?
- if not, you are invited to join Connect Cell! Monday evening at church! or, start a group. Gather 2 or 3 friends on go through the Way or use Weekly Shepherd

Are you struggling with an addiction? purity?

- have you confessed to your small group?
- consider attending Set Free in Nov! or joining Path to Freedom Oct 11 know... some of you are hurting, or fearful as you have been hurt, you don’t know where to start... TAKE THE NEXT STEP – Connect Cell! Path to Freedom!

REMEMBER: Romans 15:1 We who are strong ought to bear with the shortcomings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

DO NOT NEGLECT MEETING TOGETHER!

AFTER SERVICE PRAYER – PRAYER ROOM – 9AM and 11AM

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2024

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Israel & Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal**: Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers