

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER!

PSALM 133 / ECCLESIASTES 4:7-12

JOHN 17:20-23 / EPHESIANS 4:2-6

As I have been praying and thinking through what this INTERIM TIME is going to look like for our church, I've been trying to identify the major ingredients we will need in order for us to not only make it through this interim period, but to become a healthy, growing church.

While there are many factors that go into making us a healthy, growing church, there is one ingredient that that we CANNOT leave out:

*IF WE ARE GOING TO BECOME the HEALTHY, GROWING CHURCH GOD DESIGNED US TO BE,
WE HAVE TO BE TOGETHER! UNIFIED! ONE BODY! ONE FAMILY!*

HERE'S THE PROBLEM! *Americans are among the loneliest people in the world. In the midst of busy lives, overcommitted schedules, and congested cities, **WE FEEL AND LIVE ALL ALONE.***

We are a culture that CRAVES RELATIONSHIPS, BUT we LIVE LONELY LIVES. We live and work in a sea of humanity, but we miss out on regular, meaningful relationships. We need to BE TOGETHER, but we live in a way that ISOLATES US from the thing that we need most, RELATIONSHIPS.

I WONDER HOW MANY PEOPLE SITTING IN THIS ROOM TODAY, FEEL ALL ALONE?

*God did not intend us to live life this way. When we are saved God unites us in a relationship to His Son Jesus, but He also created us to experience relationships within the context of a community of other believers, we call the **CHURCH.***

I AM CALLING THIS MESSAGE, **“BETTER TOGETHER!”** AND I WANT TO SHOW YOU WHY IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE STAY TOGETHER AND WHAT THAT KIND OF LIFE LOOKS LIKE.

- **DAVID SAYS THAT LIFE IS REFRESHING WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER!**

PSALM 133

“How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD gives HIS BLESSING, even eternal life.”

- David ruled over Judah (southern) for 7.5 yrs and then over of Israel and Judah for 33 yrs.
- David knew what it was like to rule a divided kingdom and when God brought the nation together, it must have been **A REFRESHING TIME** for him.

“THE DEW OF HERMON”

Mt. Hermon is a 9,200-foot peak that provides the major water supply for the Jordan river by its melting snow. IT'S A SYMBOL OF EXTREME REFRESHMENT.

- **SOLOMON SAYS THAT LIFE HAS BENEFITS WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER!**

ECCLESIASTES 4:7-12

- **IT IS A MEANINGLESS, MISERABLE BUSINESS TO STRIVE ONLY TO PLEASE YOURSELF!**
- **WE GET MORE ACCOMPLISHED WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER!** *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.” (v9)*

***FOR EXAMPLE:** If we have 300 people here today, working in 300 different directions, all of them good, BUT different directions, we can't accomplish near as much as when we lay down our personal preferences and strong opinions and decide to all work together to accomplish the same goal!*

- **WE ARE PROTECTED WHEN WE HAVE ONE ANOTHER'S BACKS!** *“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” (v12)*

***FOR EXAMPLE:** Every major storm I've faced in my life, I have been able to get through, because I have always been part of a Sunday school class and a home group, even before I started in full-time ministry.*

- **BEST REASON: JESUS PRAYS FOR US TO BE TOGETHER!**

JOHN 17:20-23 = JESUS PRAYS!

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S ON A PERSON'S HEART, LISTEN TO HOW THEY PRAY.

JESUS PRAYED FOR US TO BE ONE!

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be **ONE**, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us **SO THAT** the world may believe that you have sent me.*

*I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be **ONE** as we are **ONE** —I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete **UNITY**. **THEN** the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”*

***JESUS KNEW THAT OUR BEST CHANCE AT FULFILLING HIS PLAN WAS
TO BE TOGETHER!***

- WHEN WE SHOW THE WORLD THAT WE ARE PUT TOGETHER BY GOD AND FOR GOD, WE CREATE **A MAGNETIC WITNESS.**
- WHEN WE SHOW THE WORLD THAT WE ARE CONSTANTLY DIVIDED AND AT ODDS WITH ONE ANOTHER, WE CREATE **A REPULSIVE WITNESS.**

The puritan preacher Thomas Brooks wrote: “Discord and division become no Christian. For wolves to worry the lambs is no wonder, but for one lamb to worry another, this is unnatural and monstrous.”

- **PAUL CHALLENGES US TO LIVE A LIFE THAT IS WORTHY OF GOD'S PLAN.**

EPHESIANS 4:1 & 4-6

- *“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”*
- *“There is **ONE** body and **ONE** Spirit, just as you were called to **ONE** hope when you were called; **ONE** Lord, **ONE** faith, **ONE** baptism; **ONE** God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

- **PAUL SHOWS US THE MARKS OF A WORTHY LIFE.**

EPHESIANS 4:2-3

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace”. (v2-3)

- **HUMBLE**
- HUMILITY is to BE STRONG, but UNDER GOD'S CONTROL.
- HUMILITY is when you willingly, intentionally submit to your church leadership, to walk alongside them for the health of this church, even when you don't fully understand or even when you don't fully agree with every decision that is made. TOGETHER IS THE POINT!
- **GENTLE**
- “A GENTLE ANSWER turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1)
- AN ATTRACTIVE WITNESS is seasoned with a spirit of GRACE.
- **PATIENT**
- Our culture teaches us that IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION is our birthright.
- Jesus teaches us to be STILL and KNOW THAT He is God.
- **FORBEARING**
- PUTTING UP with one another, because Jesus puts up with us!
- If Jesus were to RESPOND THE WAY YOU DO, what would that look like?
- **LOVING**
- Your motivation for what you do should always be one of LOVE.
- **UNIFIED**
- Deciding that being TOGETHER is so much better than being ALONE.
- **PEACEFUL**
- HOW DO YOU RESPOND WHEN SOMETHING DOESN'T GO YOUR WAY?

Do you start TALKING and stating your OPINIONS like they are the gospel!? Do you send off emotionally-charged EMAILS in an attempt to form a RESISTANCE with other members?

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR OPINION OR EMAIL IS WORTH HEARING OR READING?

- QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR OPINION OR EMAIL:
- MOTIVATED BY LOVE?
- BUILD OTHERS UP? (EPHESIANS 4:29)
 3. BATHED IN PRAYER?
 4. BASED ON THE BIBLE?

[If your opinion or email causes division, or anger, or arguing, or bitterness, or stress, or a rebellious spirit, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR MOTIVATION IS, it is not worth hearing or reading. (GALATIANS 5:19-21)]