

*Doing.Life.Together.:*  
*Where We are Headed in Community*  
*Community Emphasis*

Text: *My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 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 (John 17:20 - 21).*

Thesis: We were meant to do life together with one another and with the Triune God.

Consider: Today, we will talk about where we have been in our community emphasis. Then, we will highlight where we are headed in community.

Introduction:

Back in February, we launched our new sermon series around our community emphasis: *Doing.Life.Together.*

1. **Sermon-based groups are our strategy for getting in action around the same word of the Lord as a community of faith** (Acts 2:42-47):
  - a. About twice a year, we align Journey Groups, Children's Ministry, and Youth Ministry around the same focus.
  - b. *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).*
2. **Doing.Life.Together.**
  - a. For this sermon series, our goal has been to increase our community awareness, our community vision, and our community impact, instead of showing up as independent silos, independent operators, and isolated individuals.
    - i. *For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the*

*saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21).*

- ii. There are dimensions of the love of the Lord that we only can experience together in community.
- b. We are called in Christ to do life together.
- c. This sermon series is an opportunity for each of us to grow in our skills for being and building a healthy community.
- d. We acknowledge that we have to develop skills and capacity in order to do life together.
- e. **Through our community emphasis, the Lord has been inviting us into a process of growth and change so that we can be the temple, the home, the dwelling place that he desires for us to be for him.**

### **The Why of Community: Why is community a part of our vision?**

1. **Community is the nature of who God is.**
  - a. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in eternal communion and oneness.
  - b. Our Triune God is community.
2. **We are made to connect deeply with the Lord and with others.**
  - a. **Belonging:** it is a deep, human need. We are **created** to do life together.
    - i. *The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Genesis 2:18).*
  - b. **Interdependence:** we need each other and can do more together than we can do alone (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Like the parts of the physical body, we are **designed** to do life together as the body of Christ.
  - c. **Love:** it is the defining virtue of who we are and how we are meant to live as humans (The Great Commandment, Matthew 22:37-39). **Love is our motive, our means, and our vision** to do life together.
3. **Jesus puts us into committed communities.**
  - a. Jesus called his disciples to follow him, and they followed him as a **company of committed followers** (Matthew 4:19).
  - b. **Jesus sends us out to live missionally in community.**
    - i. Jesus sent out his disciples in groups (Luke 9 and 10).

- ii. Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). Part of our identity and mission involves advancing against the kingdom of darkness and plundering the enemy’s camp.
  - iii. Teams formed the first missional efforts in Acts. (See Acts 13.)
- c. **Jesus puts us into local congregations called churches.**
- i. Each local congregation is unique in its identity, gifting, and expression of the nature of the Lord in a given community and to the world.
  - ii. **These local churches are committed communities that display what it is like to live according to the kingdom of God.** And, they are on display for all the world to see.

### Reviewing our series: **Doing.Life.Together.**

1. **We began our community emphasis by considering the why of community.**  
Sunday, 2/6/17
  - a. So much of the time, we look at the what and how of life.
  - b. **In our first message on community, we felt it was important to catch the vision of why the Lord has called us to live in community and why community is such a critical part of our transformation process.**
2. **We heard “A Call for True Christian Community.”** Sunday, 2/13/17
  - a. True Christian community is not just about WHAT we do as we “do life together,” but also HOW we do life together.
  - b. **Our challenge is to express authentic love, show genuine honor, and unite wholeheartedly in purpose and vision.**
3. **We heard about “Hope for Everyone.”** Sunday, 2/20/17
  - a. We honed in on the subject of honor.
  - b. **We are invited to create a culture of honor.**
  - c. Joshua Rushing helped us to consider a list of 15 different ways to show and express honor to one another.
4. **We considered the kingdom application of “Sharing the Heart of God.”**  
Sunday, 2/27/17
  - a. **We were challenged and equipped by Jeff Chapman with the vision and desire of touching those around us with the compassion of the Lord.**
  - b. We believe the Lord gave us a kingdom application that intentionally expresses all of our vision as an integrated whole: intimacy, community, and kingdom.

- c. We want to hear the Lord, partner together, and touch the lives of others with a simple question: How can I pray for you?
  - d. **Jesus models for us and invites us to live like him: to go, to see, to have compassion, and to act.** As we go, we want to see what the Lord sees, to feel about others like the Lord feels about them, and to get in action with the Holy Spirit to interact intentionally with others.
5. **We had a community event where we heard and celebrated what the Lord did through us together on the Mission Trip to Myanmar.** Sunday, 3/5/17
- a. *From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. 27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they stayed there a long time with the disciples (Acts 14:26-17).*
  - b. **We partner together and we all share in the eternal fruit** of what the Lord does through our partnership in prayer and finances to touch the lives of our friends in Myanmar.
6. **We had an community-wide encounter with the Lord who moved among us with his powerful touch.** Sunday, 3/12/17
- a. **During worship, the Lord showed up with healing and breakthrough.** We got in step with what the Lord was doing and we prayed with each other for the purposes of the Lord.
  - b. **It was a community experience of the presence and power of the Lord.**
7. **We considered last week the call of the Lord for us regarding “Getting Intentional about our Vision.”** Sunday, 3/19/17
- a. **We believe that the Lord has been speaking to us about becoming more intentional about our vision.** That happens as we share God's heart– with him and with others.
  - b. I believe that our kingdom application, How can I pray for you?, is an expression of our DNA, of who we are as a congregation.
  - c. I believe the Lord wants to change us, to grow our capacity, and to develop in us a lifestyle of intentionality, both as individuals and as a community.
  - d. **This kingdom application becomes a way to share the heart of God, to listen to the leading the Holy Spirit, and to get in action as community** (doing it together; reporting back in community our experiences and learning).
    - i. **We have committed to getting in action for 4 months, from March - June, as a way to build new capacity and to develop new skills as we share the heart of the Lord.**
    - ii. **Our compassion event on March 10 was a community building experience.** It is like going on a mission trip together. **When we**

are stretched, when we are challenged, when we are called upon to exercise faith, and when we do it together, we build bonds of shared experience and affection.

### Where are we headed in our community emphasis?

1. **We are destined to be the home and habitation where God dwells, where he feels at home** (Isaiah 66:1-2; Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 21:3).
  - a. *This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. **Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?** 2 **Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word** (Isaiah 66:1-2).*
  - b. *In him the whole building is joined together and rises **to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.** (Ephesians 2:21-22).*
  - c. *... **you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house** to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5).*
  - d. *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "**Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God**" (Revelation 21:1-3).*
2. **We have a shared vision and a shared life as we are on a shared mission together.**
  - a. We live missionally in community for the sake of the king.
  - b. We partner with Jesus in carrying out his promises, purposes, and plans in the earth.
3. **We live as an eschatological community, prophesying about and pointing toward the time when the Lord returns and establishes his kingdom in the earth.**
  - a. Our lives together are **a prophetic testimony**; only the Lord could build his church and cause us to stand against all the evil that has tried to destroy the church.
  - b. Our lives together are **a prophetic word**; we live in a way that shows and tells what it is like to be a part of the kingdom of God.
  - c. We are to live now as **a foreshadowing** of what the Lord desires for all people, relationships, and communities.

4. **We believe that the Lord has a rich deposit in us that fills the deep longings in the people around us and in our culture.**
- a. **Belonging:** people long for deep relationships where they can connect deeply and be known. People want to be a part of something.
  - b. **Becoming:** people want to grow, change, and fulfill purpose. Transformation is an important buzz word in our culture today. People are being changed in this congregation.
  - c. **Experiencing:** people want to taste, see, and experience, not just hear words or teachings. People today want to do something and make an impact. Calvary is a place of encounter with the Lord.
  - d. **What else has the Lord deposited in us that we need to help others become aware of and that we need to give away?**
5. **Where are we headed?** See Matthew 9:35-38 and Revelation 19:7.
- a. **We join Jesus on his mission** (Matthew 9:35-38).
    - i. **See** what God sees: people in every sector of society who are harassed and helpless.
      - (1) Jesus saw what they needed: They need workers to labor among them.
    - ii. **Feel** what the Lord feels: *he had compassion on them.*
      - (1) It is easy not to pay attention, to close our eyes and hearts to the condition of others.
      - (2) But the Lord wants us to feel what he feels: They need a shepherd. They need someone to touch them and serve them.
    - iii. **Pray**
      - (1) Intercession must be our first response to what we see, so that we get the heart of God, the mind of Christ, and the anointing of the Spirit.
    - iv. **Receive** anointing and instruction (Matthew 10:1-10)
      - (1) Not to build a ministry.
      - (2) But to do ministry, to be a laborer, to be a minister of good news.
    - v. **Go**
      - (1) God sends us out as his ambassadors in daily life.
      - (2) If we are in connection with one another, we will heed godly wisdom and counsel.
      - (3) It is imperative that we follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit to touch every neighborhood and sector of society.

- b. **We prepare for the wedding of the ages** (Revelation 19:6-8).
- i. *Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) (Revelation 19:6-8).*
  - ii. We rejoice, celebrate, and give the Lord glory because our God reigns.
  - iii. We make preparations now by growing in our capacity to do right: right actions, right thinking, right living, right believing, right affections, right relating, right serving... with the help and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.
- c. **We partner with the Lord in restoring individuals, social systems, communities, and nations to God's design.**
- i. We partner with the Lord *now* in his restoring and redemptive work.
  - ii. When Jesus comes again, we will partner with him for a thousand years to put all things right (Acts 3:21).
6. **Let's celebrate what God has put in us and where God is leading us.**
- a. Our vision lines up with what the Lord is doing now and where the Lord is headed.
  - b. **Intimacy**
    - i. We will come to the experiential knowledge of, into intimacy with, the Son of God (Ephesians 4:11-13).
    - ii. Let's partner with the Holy Spirit now to grow in our intimacy with the Lord.
  - c. **Community**
    - i. **We will be known for our love for one another** as a community of followers of Jesus.
      - (1) *By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35).*
    - ii. **We will be known for unity with the Lord and with one another** in authentic community (John 17:20-21).
      - (1) *My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 **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 (John 17:20 - 21).*
    - iii. Let's partner with the Holy Spirit now to grow our capacity to love one another and to become one with one another in unity.

d. **Kingdom**

- i. We will have a “yes” in our spirit, a radical obedience to do the will and follow the ways of the Lord, like Jesus (Hebrews 10:7).
- ii. Let’s partner with the Holy Spirit now to get in action intentionally to obey the Lord and to follow Jesus well.

7. **Ministry Time**

From an article: *If Community Were a Safe Place to Fall Apart*

And it (just finding out, after the fact, that a friend got a divorce) made me ponder: how is that the coming together is in the light, in public, a public celebration - but the falling apart done in the shadows, in silence, in loneliness?

If we are a community, we should be together through thin and thick, for better and for worse. We stand together in the valleys and on the mountaintops. How do we make it possible for us to stand together when each of us goes through the valleys?

Why do we celebrate together but suffer in silence?

It made me realize that we have no rituals for suffering, for breaking up, for hurting. I am not sure what those rituals would look like, but it does seem like something to seek.

How do we create a sense of community that makes it easier for us to reach out to one another to let each other know that we are struggling in the most intimate parts of our lives? That we can share our vulnerability and hurts more freely with one another?

How do we make it easier to ask for help and support, before things get so bad? When they have gotten so bad? Through the so-bad? And on to the beyond-the-so-bad?

Perhaps we can affirm to one another that they, we, all of us, need not suffer in silence. So many of us have families and relationships that do not look like the idealized images around us. That's especially true in these holiday seasons, when many people are hurting in silence. The holiday times are often lonely for many. Others have to be around difficult family members out of a sense of obligation. Some of our children have to spend their holidays navigating their way by going back and forth between former partners who no longer can stand to be around each other.

Let us be friends to one another for a lifetime. Let us be friends who are here to love and support each other. And to know that we are here for each other in the joyous celebration, and in the mourning and the grief. Let us form beautiful and intimate circles of love and support for one another, to celebrate and also to grieve together.