

## “Built Together Part 15 - Fellowship” (2-25-24)

### Series Review: Section 1 - Living in Community / Section 2 - Gifts for Building up in Love

**Key Verse: Eph. 2:22** - “In him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

**Section 3:** The Mature Church - 4 Components of a Mature, Healthy church - produces fruit & reproduces life  
(presence of God, community/fellowship, discipleship, outreach/mission)

#### **Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)**

(18) And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- **Presence** (vs. 18 & 20b - He has all the authority . . . He is with us always)
- **Community / Fellowship** (19b - baptize them into this community - the God community)
- **Discipleship** (19a & 20a - “make disciples . . . teaching them to observe all I have commanded”)
- **Outreach / Mission** (19a - “go . . . all nations”)

**Last week:** Presence (Abiding in God’s Presence personally & corporately). Abiding - grows character which brings maturity (Parts 1-2), then in maturity we reproduce (Parts 3-4).

**Today:** The 2nd of 4 - **Fellowship (and the role of growing in character)**

### 1) An Abiding Fellowship (Sacrificial Love)

Let’s start by looking back at Jesus words from our time last Sunday . . .

#### **John 15:9-11 (ESV)**

(9) As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. (10) If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. (11) These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

**Note:** Abiding is about enjoying the love of God. We are to learn about, & live in the activity of Abiding Love.

Now, Jesus immediately connects this with our love for each other . . .

#### **John 15:12-13, 17 (ESV)**

(12) “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (13) Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. . . (17) These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

**Note:** Abiding produces Maturity thru the real-life practice of sacrificial love.

All too often when we envision life in community, we imagine some perfect scenario. Not the real life of people who are different from us, who struggle, who require something of us that might be uncomfortable or difficult.

One of the biggest issues with our way of building community now is that it is so impersonal, and it’s so curated to fit our likes & dislikes, it’s often based on common interests and agreement. Once I’m tired of someone I just unfollow and disappear.

How often do we opt out of a real, committed, loving community because it’s inconvenient, it’s difficult, or it didn’t meet our expectations?

## Some good news . . .

### John 17:11-12 (ESV)

(11) And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. (12) While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

**Note:** God works to guard us and keep us as one - united with God and therefore each other! (His presence in our fellowship)

## 2) A Distinct Fellowship (Sanctified in Truth)

### John 17:14-19 (ESV)

(14) I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (15) I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. (16) They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (18) As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. (19) And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

**Note:** The essential need for the Word of Truth to sanctify us, is because we live in opposition to the world's order, yet we live amid the world. This kind of living is more radical than we might at first imagine. We are called to community in a very specific way - in the world, yet separate from it.

We often struggle with this as the church - either far too easily slipping into compromise and merging with the culture around us. Or we swing to an extreme of isolation, completely removed from the very people around us who need Jesus.

But we are not called to either of these things. We are called to be distinctly different, in full view of the world.

A loving and committed community that is being sanctified (defined by & formed by) the Word of Truth.

**Sanctified meaning:** to separate & cleanse (Think dirty dishes made clean)

### Acts 20:28-32 (ESV)

(28) Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (29) I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; (30) and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. (31) Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. (32) And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

**See:** Ephesians 4:17-5:21 - After defining some ways the world lives in opposition to our faith, Paul says . . .

### Ephesians 4:20-24 (ESV)

(20) But that is not the way you learned Christ!— (21) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, (22) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, (23) and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, (24) and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

**Note:** This is our identity, so we ought to remind and encourage each other about who we really are now!

Paul then unpacks some very practical distinctives . . . (spend some time with this thru 5:21)

**From Ephesians 4:25-5:21**

(25) Speaking Truth

(26-27) Deal with problems immediately - don't fester in anger

(28) Work hard and help meet each other's needs

(29-31) May your speech build up, not tear down

(32) Marked by kindness and forgiveness

Chapter 5 continues with issues of morality - high sexual ethic, greed/coveting, crude speech, etc.

**3) A Devoted Fellowship****John 17:20-23 (ESV)**

(20) "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, (21) that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (22) The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, (23) I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

**Note:** He gives us the glory of being united with God, so we may be perfected in love!

**Perfectly means:** complete or mature

See to walk out the next 2 things we'll be studying well (discipleship & outreach), we out to have this working. Otherwise, we will be impacting people, but we'll be duplicating something that isn't healthy.

Remember, in this passage, Jesus was praying about the people who would be reached through the fruit of his disciples - that's us!

**Practical guide to a devoted fellowship . . .** Consistent Gathering around the Word, Food, and Prayer

**Acts 2:42 (ESV)**

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

**Acts 2:44-45 (ESV)**

(44) And all who believed were together and had all things in common. (45) And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

**Note:** In their devotion to each other they were aware of, and meeting each other's practical needs!

**Conclusion:** May we be defined by and committed to experiencing the Presence of God in the midst of our Fellowship, so that we can be an abiding, sanctified, and mature body, that will bring glory to Jesus!