

Open: last week we encouraged the church to draw closer to God and His word so as to develop strong and healthy roots. Another way we develop roots that can endure the difficulties of this life is by strengthening our relationships with other people of faith. Unfortunately, in this culture of social media, most people have so many acquaintances and very few friends. No matter the culture the Church can and should be different.

Key Scripture:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 9Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. 10For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. 11Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? 12And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.

Hebrews 10:24-25 24and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Proverbs 13:20 Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.

Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives and follow the example of their faith.

1. Bad company destroys good roots:

- a. Show me your friends and I will show you your future.
- b. None of us is beyond being influenced by the people we surround ourselves with.
- c. The hermit said, “I will be influenced by no one” Except He is influenced by himself becoming shallow indifferent and arrogant.
- d. People carry spiritual baggage, and we pass those weights onto other people like a cold we catch.

- e. The trajectory of most relationships in this life is away from God, therefore we must be intentionally adding relationships in Christ that build our faith up instead of draining us.

2. A lack of fellowship dries up our roots.

- a. Too many are Sunday morning only Christians. No fellowship takes place with other believers throughout the week.
- b. When is the last time, or first time you sat with another brother or sister in Christ for a meal and just got to know them and hear their story in God?
- c. Each relationship in Christ intertwines our roots with that person and helps us to grow stronger together.
- d. Key Point: You need to invest time with other believers to grow in a healthy way. Jesus never intended you to be a lone ranger, Christian.

3. The threat of building your life in isolation?

- a. Your perspective is so limited when it is only received from your limited understanding.
- b. We miss the inheritance God has promised us in the rich fellowship we can share with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
- c. We miss the opportunity to serve and receive a blessing in doing so.
- d. We become selfish, self-centered, and visionless.
- e. Key Point: As Christians we should always have a personal set of goals and vision for our lives and a corporate group goal that we are participating in with our family of faith.
- f. You and I are not strong enough to walk alone through this life. No matter who you are you were made for deep, meaningful, and life-giving relationship with other people of like faith.

4. Why do we pull away from God's people?

- a. We are afraid of commitment. We don't want to be held accountable or responsible.
- b. We like to do things our way, we are already selfish, and we like it the way we like it and don't tell me otherwise.

- c. Starting new relationships can seem like a daunting task, some would rather not try at all than try and get rejected.
- d. We received pain from those I let get close to my life. Unfortunately, we cannot avoid some relationships bringing us pain in this life. However, the pain doesn't define us, and it doesn't destroy. We grow from every relationship good and bad.
- e. We have too many "friends" with worldly and carnal people who add no spiritual depth to our soul. We simply don't make time because we have made time for those who are running a different race.
- f. **Key Point: Be careful when you identify and enjoy carnal minded people more than people of sincere faith and love in God, it may be a sign you have already slipped away from Christ.**
- g. I have acquaintances and relationships with people who are not Christian to love & save them. I genuinely don't have much in common with an unsaved person in this world, but I may share common desires that I can connect with them through. The purpose of those connections with the lost is for me to draw them closer to Jesus and not them drawing me closer to the world.
- h. Hypocrisy.

5. How Does God use Mentors to help us grow our roots?

- a. They bring much needed wisdom to our lives and help us to see things that we are oblivious to otherwise.
- b. They confirm God's voice to us, bringing us assurance that the things we are hearing from God are true and accurate.
- c. They can recognize sickness in our lives and because of vast experiences can help us make good decisions that will lead us to success and fruitfulness.
- d. They bring encouragement at just the right moments.
- e. When you have a Godly voice in your life, God will use them prophetically to speak to you on behalf of himself.
- f. When you have a Godly voice in your life, God will warn you of impending danger before you ever meet it, so that you avoid it.

g. Life Lesson: A Godly mentor doesn't tell you what you want to hear but what you need to hear to keep running your race to victory.

6. Experience the Joy of real, deep, and loving relationships with God's people.

- a. God desires for this church to draw much closer to each other than what has been typical.
- b. Spiritual growth and development don't happen at a distance.
- c. Shallow roots are made for climates that are well watered. The Christian was not called to the comfortable and convenient life and therefore we need deep, strong, and vibrant roots.
- d. It takes deeper relationships amongst the people of God to grow the kind of churches that can win the battles they face.
- e. Life Lesson: There is no substitute, no replacement for Christians doing life together in the world. It is the missing piece to every unhealthy Christian.**
- f. Show me a Christian who lacks maturity, and I will show you a Christian without mature friends in their life.

Conclusion: This week develop 3 types of relationships. The first relationship is with a Godly mentor in your life. Take time to meet with them and ask them to speak into your life. This person will give to you, and you will exclusively receive from them. The second relationship is with a brother or sister who is running a similar race as you, someone you are equal with and can mutually understand and encourage each other. This person will mutually give and take from you and you from them. Lastly develop a relationship with someone you can pour the valuable things of your life into. This is someone you can teach and equip. This person will take from you.

Altar: Breaking loneliness off God's people.