

View from the Summit

Life together

Intro:

Connected is a funny word in the church. You may or may not be surprised by how many times the term “connected” gets used. My job title is the “Care and CONNECTION pastor” I hang out and enjoy those who I feel a connection to. I go out of my way to be around those I feel connected to. Disconnection can be a lonely desperate place. If you talk to people who are thinking about leaving a church (ours included) I suspect the percentage is pretty high that disconnect is a big part of it. Who or what are you most connected to?

**Let me ask you this.**

**Are you connected to God?**

**Do you feel disconnected to God?** Being disconnected to people is one thing. But does it do to your heart and soul when you feel disconnected to God? Do you feel abandoned? Unimportant? Left out?

Being Connected and unified is important enough to us that we have it as one of our 5 core values. It is important to be reminded and realize that we are unified and connected In Jesus that results in us being connected and unified with God the Father and other believers...in that order.

I think we are all on a journey to know God, but often struggle. Jesus’ prayer for us

**(John 17:20-21 ESV)**

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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.

**(John 17:22-23 ESV)**

The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 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.

We can do life together because of what has already been done on the cross.

We don’t have to try to get along so we can hopefully have Jesus. We have (verse 22) the glory of Jesus **in us** as believers and so we can become the united body of Christ in life together!

Because of what we have in Jesus we have unity with God YES, but also each other.

Big Idea: SO we can say:

Because of our unity with Jesus we will discover not only do we have unity with God we can be devoted to life together with each other.

1. What is Life Together?
2. What does life together here look like? How does Life Together create unity with God and unity with others?
3. What makes “life together” sustainable?

### 1. What is life together?

Life together in the body of Christ and for the Summit

What do we mean by life together?

#### Definition

“Life Together” is being joined together in Christ to live out together the mission of God in everything we do.

This communion of the saints **begins through the work of Christ** through the presence of the Holy Spirit. This joins us with believers across the world as part of the literal body of Christ. This real joining together in Christ then compels us to “**live together**” to carry out the mission of God. Life together involves everything God has given us that can glorify His name: Corporate worship, meals in homes, praying, grieving, playing, working, serving, caring, speaking the truth in love, and more.

**Life together is just like it sounds. It is LIVING life (all of life) together. Some of you feel like something is missing because you are wanting all of this to happen on Sunday mornings. There are 6 other days that life is being lived as well.**

Our unity in life together is a result of our unity in Christ. Not the other way around. We don't devote ourselves to the body of Christ to become unified with Christ. It's because of the goodness of what Jesus is praying for us in John 17 and what we have in Him that allows us to be unified in life together.

Our connection comes from our position in Christ and the goal is **God being glorified**.

It's the ...”**to the glory of God**”. **Of our mission here! Together in the gospel, for the Gospel, to the glory of God.**

Our core values fit into how we live out our mission. Our Mission could be said this way: **Living Together** in the Gospel, **for the gospel, to the glory of God.**

**But...The world can do “life together” too and it looks pretty good. Sometimes it's more fulfilling to us to hang out with our friends at the bar than it is to come to church or be devoted to how the Gospel calls us to do life together.**

Illus. What is different in the church doing life together and how the world does life together. People come together in tough times. We watched most of America Come together after 9/11. You couldn't look anywhere without seeing an American flag. I went with a group of guys to the first game at Wrigley field after the Attacks on 9/11. Upon introduction Sammy Sosa came sprinting out of

the dugout with a huge American flag held high over his head and ran around the entire outfield! It was really cool. The whole stadium was chanting USA USA USA. 'Murica! Now look at us. But it didn't take long until politics and politicians divided the country and all its people. The world can do life together pretty well at times. It can even look pretty Godly at times. People rally to those in need after tornadoes and earth quakes. But many times when things start to look ok people go home. But when we experience what Jesus prays for us and what we have in him we get the WHY we Do Life together that we will be united in the everyday mundane.

**If we as believers begin to do "life together" we will realize it is for the long run. There will be a lot of messes to navigate. Painful suffering but also intense rejoicing!**

Let's look at what Jesus is praying for us as it pertains to a devotion to the Body of Christ doing life together.

**(John 17:20-24 ESV)**

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 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. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 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. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Jesus wants us to know a couple of things as we experience Life together with Him.

1. **Life together is a GOOD thing!** Jesus understands the immense joy and fulfillment of what it is to be one (connected) in Jesus and God the Father
  - a. Jesus knows the perfect joy of an eternity of perfect union with His Father, God. He is praying that we would know that union as well!
2. **Jesus Glory lives in us-** giving us a new identity- one that is unified with other believers. Because Jesus lives in us and has given us a new identity we can live together with those who are like us and those far different.
3. **That he loves you with the deepest kind of love-** the kind of love of a father who created you. The kind of love only Jesus has experienced is now praying we would know that love as well.

The "Why" is different than we might think. **Jesus doesn't want us to know his glory and love so that he can make much of us. He wants us to live in this unity and knowledge of his love so we can MAKE MUCH OF HIM.** HE is the big deal not us. The world's way of doing life together focuses on people.

Jesus calls us to life together to focus on Him and bring Him glory. **There is much more joy here than we know or can imagine!**

**He wants us to experience what the trinity has experienced for eternity. And He prays it to leads to the world knowing who God is and how much He loves us**

The difference between the world life together and Jesus' life together that we are called to live life together in a way that 1. **the world (verse 21) would believe God sent his son Jesus into the world.** And 2. (verse 23) **that the world would know that God has loved the world as he does His own son.**

## **2. What does a Jesus centered Life together look like here at the Summit?**

**Well here is what we want it to look like!**

**God who answers prayer answers Jesus' prayer in John 17** in Acts 2 Jesus has returned to the Father and the holy spirit is given to his followers and the Church is about to explode with new believers

Everything that Jesus prays for us begins to happen in Acts 2.

The Fellowship of the Believers

**(Acts 2:41-47 ESV)**

**[41] So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.**

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Right off the bat believers began to devote themselves to Life Together.  
DEVOTE!

### **1. The teaching of Scripture.**

- a. Devoted to the teaching of scripture.
- b. Being hungry for truth. They turned to the disciples who had known the love of Jesus for 3 years devoting themselves to Jesus' teaching.
- c.** In order to be together in the word we must know our position in Christ. If we get together to tell each other what we think scripture is saying about us it can go sideways quickly and we can become divided. We don't devote ourselves to what we think scripture is saying to us...we devote ourselves to what the scripture is actually saying. Jesus is the center of all of it. **Col. 1:17 says And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

- d. This does happen on Sunday but also in Community Groups, preaching cohort, DNA groups, bible studies. Life together we are devoted to the teaching of scripture.
2. The FELLOWSHIP (Gk. koinōnía). **The communion or common faith, experiences, and expressions shared by the family of believers, as well as the intimate relationship they have with God.**
  - a. I love this definition! We were talking about this concept in Preaching Cohort this past Tuesday and one of the commentaries talked about us being **WILLING Contributors to this way of life.**
  - b. A heart that longs to live this out.
  - c. Illus- Many of you know that 5 Sundays ago my dad died suddenly of a heart attack. The Lord was so gracious to orchestrate that his three kids and 6 of 7 of his grandkids were there at the same time. The past month has been profoundly painful for me, but this part of life together has held me and my family together. This event has brought my immediate family closer together. It is a common pain among us that unites us together. When Ryan, my brother expresses his pain I feel it with him. Same with my sister and Mom. This has made me have a longing to be even closer to them in life.
  - d. **But something else amazing happened during this time...you my church family have willingly participated in Koinania with me and my family. I watched my brother and sister in Christ Greg who was in my wedding almost 15 years ago and his wife Kim walk in to my dad's visitation at the funeral home, just 12 hours from their home. John and Fran showed up at my parents' house to cry with us. So many notes, cards, posts on Facebook, meals, hugs, words of encouragement, Lunches together. His grandkids called him Popeye- I came home from Texas to a toy Popeye sitting next to an awesome canvas of pictures of my dad because my friend Dave and Amy fellowship with us. I have felt what Jesus has prayed for us. That we would be united because of Him. (1 Corinthians 12:26 ESV) If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.**
  - e. I got a text from Russ Wilson the week my dad died that I think is evidence of living life together well. **"I've learned that the harder you laugh with someone, the harder you'll cry with them. I love you, brother. Learning of your dad's passing crushed me, because I know it crushed you. My heart aches right now, because I know yours does too.** Because Russ and I have been devoted to living life together in unity...**in the mundane It affects how we do life in the extremes of rejoicing and in profound sadness and grief. It's because of our unity in Christ that allows us to do this kind of fellowship together**
  - f. I value Fellowship in life together WE at The summit value fellowship

**g. All of the membership covenant here is about knowing your position and connection with Jesus and committing to being in community here doing life together**

**h. (1 John 1:2-4 ESV) [2] the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— [3] that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. [4] And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.**

3. **Breaking bread together-** Where fellowship is my favorite to talk about this one is my favorite to practice.
  - a. Redeeming meals has been one of my favorite things about my job. I have loved seeing us come together for meals and what happens around these tables. So much life that is being lived together being talked about at the table. Stories told. Laughter, tears, and full bellies.
  - b. We practice communion almost every week. Because we are devoted to remembering what Jesus did for us making us unified with Him and His father making it possible for us to be a part of the same family. Brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - c. Our community group eats together before we meet each time. We have become and are becoming more and more united family all the time. We have 2 to 3 sushi nights per year
  - d. Devotion to eating together is very important. It is meals here, meals with family, with neighbors, with those outside our tribe. Eat with someone who disagrees with you with the prayer that they would see Jesus in you and how much He loves people. It is hard to hate those you break bread together with.
  - e. Acts 2- And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food **with glad and generous hearts**, praising God and having favor with all the people
4. **Devoted themselves to prayer-** I sat down with a friend of mine for lunch this week and after we had spent lunch talking about life and we were about to get up and go he stopped me and said hey let me pray for you. What??? After we eat? I am sure our server was thrown off. But it was nourishment for my soul.
  - a. Who are you devoted to praying with? I imagine if you are like me that number is way too small.
  - b. This year we are going to devote ourselves to praying together in **community groups**. Our end of the month prayer meeting will be moving to our community groups and we will be praying together as the body all over this area in our groups. I can't wait to see what God does through it!

Again we have to remember the purpose of life together is so we can experience the unity we have with the Trinity (the Father the Son the holy spirit) but to show the world who Jesus is and how much He loves us. All of these things we devote ourselves to go sideways if you take Jesus and His glory out of them.

It is why it is so easy to become divided, not connected, isolated. Something goes wrong. The enemy doesn't want us to experience and devote ourselves to life together. He will do anything he can to steal your joy. To Kill your joy. To crush you with despair. He knows there is great hope in Jesus and His Church. That is why we have to remember who we are unified with even before we pursue it with the body. If not even the good things can go wrong.

1. **people abuse scripture all the time.** If we don't devote ourselves to scripture so it will reveal more about who Jesus is it can be devastating. It is hurtful to use scripture to belittle someone or to twist it to say something that it is not. **The enemy can even use scripture to attack us. Jesus is the center of why we devote ourselves to teaching scripture!**
2. **Fellowship and breaking bread-** the world is pretty good at this but doesn't center on Jesus and when we lose whatever it is that gives us commonality we lose each other. **If Jesus isn't our commonality that it will be easy to just go and find somewhere else to do life together.** When Jesus is the center of what gives us commonality and unity we don't have to fear losing Him. He is always with us.
3. **Prayer-** yes even prayer can miss the mark. **(James 4:2-4 ESV)** You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
  - a. **John piper talks about us trying to Make God a husband of an unfaithful wife when we go to him in prayer asking him for the very things that will help us cheat on him. He talks about asking him for money to buy a prostitute to find pleasure where we don't find it in him.**

As I studied this week I think at every one of these things we want to devote ourselves to are no brainers. But why is it we find ourselves disconnected? I asked earlier, Do you feel connected to God? Do you realize what it is like to try to connect to God the father without faith in Jesus and His work? Without Jesus' work on the cross, God's holiness would crush us because of our sinfulness. But because Jesus.

**(Isaiah 53:4-6 ESV)**

**But he was pierced for our transgressions;  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,  
and with his wounds we are healed.  
All we like sheep have gone astray;  
we have turned—every one—to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.**