

**Values**  
***What is Important to Us?***  
Week 05: Relationships

**Scripture**

Various

**Series**

**Week 1: The Scriptures** (*The Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God enable us to do the will of God*)

**Week 2: Discipleship** (*Every member a minister of the Gospel*)

**Week 3: One Another** (*Together we can do more*)

**Week 4: Missions** (*Do for one what we wish we could do for all*)

**Week 5: Relationships** (*The larger we grow, the smaller we must grow*)

**Motivation (Why They Need to Know It)**

Today, I'd like to take a look at our last value, ***The larger we grow, the smaller we must grow.***

We're basically acknowledging that meeting in a large group ONLY is not enough to form significant, lasting relationships.

***What gets in the way of developing relationships?***

- Not enough time (or an unwillingness to make time)
- Lack of desire (may hide behind being an introvert)
- Clashing personalities (you don't get along with people different from you)
- Getting lost in the crowd (choosing to be anonymous; not getting involved)
- Negative past experiences (the past, for you, is certain to repeat itself)
- Pride or arrogance (you see yourself as superior to others)
- Unrealistic expectations (developing relationships take time; expect overnight)

**The reality is that a failure to develop relationships is a failure to understand God's plan for relationships and the necessity of putting in the work.**

- God's trinitarian relationship (Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness)
- Man's relationship with woman (But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him)
- Family relationship (Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain)

## Information (What They Need to Know)

### *Why should we seek out relationships in smaller environments?*

#### **Reason #1: Life seems meaningless without relationships**

**Ecclesiastes 4:7 (NLT)** I observed yet another example of something meaningless under the sun. **8** This is the case of a man who is all alone, without a child or a brother, yet who works hard to gain as much wealth as he can. But then he asks himself, “Who am I working for? Why am I giving up so much pleasure now?” It is all so meaningless and depressing.

- Life is not meant to be enjoyed apart from relationships
- Why work if there is nothing or no one for which to work?

#### *Togetherness in the book of Acts...*

All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, **together** with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (1:14)

And all who believed were **together** and had all things in common. (2:44)

And day by day, attending the temple **together** and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts... (2:46)

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered **together** was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (4:31)

When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered **together** and were praying. (12:12)

#### **Reason #2: Life's ups and downs are better with relationships**

**Ecclesiastes 4:9 (NLT)** Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. **10** If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. **11** Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone?

- They help each other succeed
- They help when one falls
- They help provide comfort (keep each other warm)

#### *Nate and Ace questions on stage*

- ✓ How long have you known each other? How did you two connect?
- ✓ How has the relationship between you two been meaningful? (give examples)
- ✓ What advice would you give someone seeking relationships?
- ✓ How could someone benefit from your group (or any group)?

### **Reason #3: Without relationships we are vulnerable to attack**

**Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NLT)** A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

#### **Application (What They Need to Do)**

Our goal is to provide a variety of environments to form relationships.

#### ***What types of relational environments are available?***

- **Bible Minor** - relational learning environment around tables
- **Food Pantry** - serving environment where you'll meet others
- **Sunday Mornings** - get here a little early; stay a little later
- **Sunday Volunteering** - serving environment working w/ people of similar gifts
- **Mom's Group** - learning environment with support for moms
- **Men's and Women's Bible Studies** - learning environment with support
- **LIFE Groups** - learning environments with support and accountability
- **Events** - Hot Summer Nights, Game Nights, Special Events, etc.

Here's the thing about these environments - **we can provide the structure, but you must put in the work.**

I'd like to close with practical advice.

#### ***Tips for Relationship Development...***

1. Take initiative (don't wait for someone to reach out to you - take the first step)
2. Show that you're friendly ("*you must be what you seek*")
3. Don't require someone to be just like you (you'll miss out)
4. Be a good listener and ask questions
5. Give it time (relationships develop over time not overnight)