

1-30-2022, COTR Texarkana

Title: Committed and Connected

Purpose: Provoke people to be vitally committed and connected to a local church family.

Truth for Today: God's plan for us is to be vitally committed and connected to a local church family.

Text: Acts 2:41-47

Topic: Local Church, Spiritual Family, Maturity, Community, Family

Series Title: The Big 10...the Path to Spiritual Maturity

Series Purpose: Provoke people to actively pursue spiritual maturity by applying the Big 10 causes for spiritual growth.

Committed and Connected

- I. Introduction (Ushers hand out Big 10 flyer) Kids in church
 - A. Review series, The Big 10, the Path to Spiritual Maturity. It's about the power of daily disciplines and experiences proven to produce spiritual maturity.
 - B. Pic Big 10 Flyer: Last week we talked about #4, the most important path to spiritual maturity is having a daily quiet time/ devotional with God. I call it, God Time! [Psalm 42:1-2 (NIV) As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. 2, **When can I go and meet with God?**] In our morning quiet time, we spend time with God in (1) thanksgiving/ worship, (2) Bible reading, and (3) prayer.
 - C. Today we'll talk about being committed and connected to a local church family: #2 Attend a weekend service (big church), #6 Connect with friends in a small group (little church) #5 Complete Equip and Foundation classes. (Dig deeper for truth) I'll talk about: (1) God's plan is for Christians to be vitally committed and connected to a local church family. (2) What's in it for me? (3) What's in it for the church?
 - D. Title: Committed and Connected
 - E. Video: Why people are committed and connected to the church community at COTR.
- II. God's plan is for Christians to be vitally committed and connected to a local church community. The local church is a spiritual family.
 - A. The pattern of the 1st church community, [Acts 2:41-46 (NLT) Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the **church** that day—about 3,000 in all. 42 All the believers **devoted** themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer...46 **They worshiped together at the Temple** each day, **met in homes** for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity...]

1. Believers in the NT were committed and connected to one another in a local church family. Local church community is the Biblical pattern for Christians. E.g., letter to church in Corinth, Philippi, etc. You can't find Christianity in the NT apart from believers gathering in local churches.
2. The NT pattern was 'big church' and 'little church'. [Vs. 46 **They worshiped together at the Temple** each day, **met in homes**] Big church today offers corporate worship, prayer and teaching the Bible in the sanctuary and classes to learn the Bible for all ages. 'Little church' complements 'Big church' by emphasizing fellowship, Gk. Koinonia/ building relationships/ making friends. It's hard to develop meaningful friendships in a weekend service but it's easy in small groups. [Philemon 2 (NIV)...to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and **to the church that meets in your home**]

B. Online church viewers are also a part of the church family. Our online pastor, Picture Michael Searles can contact you personally for prayer and counsel. You can be a part.

C. Some Christians aren't committed to a local church family. [Heb. 10:25 (NLT)...**let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do**, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.] Why don't believers commit and connect to a local church family? (1) #1 a bad experience at church, (2) Too busy, (3) Don't embrace the Biblical basis, (4) Pride...I don't need anyone.

1. Barna survey: 56% of Christians feel their spiritual life is entirely private. That's not Biblical. NT believers were committed and connected to a local church family. We should be, too.

III. What's in it for me? Why should I be committed and connected to a local church family?

A. Commitment to a local church helps us be consistent in our walk with the Lord. [Acts 2:43–47 (NLT) All the believers **devoted** themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals...and to prayer...] Def devoted: to persist with extreme effort; to be committed. Good habits produce good results, e.g., brushing and flossing our teeth, eating healthy and regular exercise, spiritual //

B. Connecting to Christian friends in a local church makes living the Christian life better, e.g., [1 Thes. 5:11 (NLT) So **encourage each other and build each other up**, just as you are already doing.] We become like the people we hang around with. If they watch porn, cheat on their spouse and do drugs, so will we. If they come to early prayer and go on mission trips, so will we. I need people to

encourage me and motivate me to live for Jesus. That's why we have small groups.

1. If you're connected in a local church, someone will help you get back on track if you fall away. [Gal. 6:1–2 (NLT) Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path...] E.g., Tempted, Sterling Lacy prayed for me.

C. A local church offers spiritual covering and accountability, [Heb. 13:17 (NCV) Obey your leaders and act under their authority. **They are watching over you, because they are responsible for your souls...**] Everyone needs to be accountable and submitted. We all need someone to help us stay on track with God. Christian leaders aren't spiritual bosses, [2 Cor. 1:24 (NLT)...that does not mean we want to **dominate you** by telling you how to put your faith into practice. We want to **work together** with you so you will be full of joy...] Seek counsel for big decisions.

D. If kids are connected in a local church they'll learn about God and the Bible and make Christian friends. There's very little in culture today that will help raise godly kids. When I was a boy, my principal prayed over the mic and shared a Bible verse before school; Sunday was sacred, we didn't have ball tournaments on the Lord's Day; Playboy magazines were hidden behind the counter, and Andy Griffith never cussed on tv. It's different today. Secular society and social media are brainwashing kids in a godless ideology. Your kids need to be in KidZone and Youth.

E. If we're committed and connected, we have a greater opportunity for significance. We can do more to expand God's Kingdom together than we can alone. [Mark 16:15 (NLT)...he (*Jesus*) told them, "**Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.**"] We can't do this by ourselves, but together we send teams, money, and training to apostolic leaders around the world. Picture Kenya water We gave money for a 1,240-gallon water tank for a church that reaches 500 people for Jesus who live in a dump. We feed them twice a month and will buy medical and hygiene items.

IV. What's in it for the church? Why does the church need people to be committed and connected?

A. We need your passion, ability, and resources so together we can accomplish God's will on the earth. We can't do it without you! [1 Cor. 12:12–27 (NLT) The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are

slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

1. We are young and old, black, white Asian and Hispanic, rich and poor but when we come together, we show the world what love and unity in Christ can do to solve the racism, hatred, and violence in our culture.

B. Vs. 14 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part... 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? 18 But our bodies have many parts, and **God has put each part just where he wants it**...20 Yes, there are many parts, but only one body...27 **All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.**

1. God has given each of us passion, ability, and resources to do His work. None of us can do it all. That's why we need each other. What if someone God has appointed to be here isn't here? We suffer; we need you. We couldn't reach moms in a crisis pregnancy without Samantha Knox; we couldn't help foster parents without Holly Carver; we couldn't help people struggling with addictions without Terry Andersen; our young children wouldn't be learning to worship God if Lacy Goff wasn't using her gift. We couldn't enjoy a caramel macchiato without our coffee bar crew.

2. You may not need us, but we need you.

V. Conclusion: It's decision time! It's time to be a doer of God's Word.

A. (1) If you've been hurt or offended at church, please give us another chance. (2) If you're watching online and can start coming back to church come; we want to see you! (3) If you believe the Holy Spirit is calling you to be a part of COTR, start your journey next Sunday @9am in the Connect class. If you've not taken classes, start. (4) If you need Christian friends, Wed Feb. 9th is the small group launch and small groups start Feb. 16. (5) If you're convicted that it's time to get involved and start using your gift, come by the Connect Room after service or call the office and let us know. God's plan is for Christians to be vitally committed and connected to a local church family. I hope you'll commit and connect!

B. Prayer

C. Souls

D. Baptism

VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.