

CONNECTED Uniting People March 11, 2018

John 17:21 I pray that they'll all be one, just as You & I are one—as You're in Me Father, and I'm in You. May they be in Us, so the world will believe You sent Me. 22 "I've given them the glory You gave Me, so they may be one as We are one. 23 I'm in them & You're in Me. May they experience such perfect **unity** that the world will know that You sent Me & that You love them as much as You love Me.

When we follow Jesus, we're connected to Jesus' people. He joins us w/ others into a building that He's constructing. We're like human LEGOs. God's snapping us together; making a temple so He can dwell among us. LEGO bricks come in all shapes, sizes, & colors. But what they have in common is that each one can connect w/ each other. Early LEGOs were made to stack just like building blocks. The ability to connect was a revolutionary idea that set them apart. Not all LEGOs have equal size/shape, but all are made to connect.

Matthew 18:20 "Where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."

Many of our relationships probably stink. Social media shows how much we want to connect. But, we're as lonely as ever. Many people have no support. People don't know how to make friends. We recognize how shallow social media relationships can be. People increasingly do activities alone that people use to do in community. Many of us have a history of wrecked & disposable relationships.

John 13:34 "...Love each other. Just as I've loved you, you should love each other. 35 Your love for one another will prove to the world that you're My disciples."

We were created for relationships. Humans weren't made for isolation. We were made for connection because we're created in the image of God. God is love, & to love, you've got to have somebody to love.

Hebrews 10:24 Let's think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love & good works. 25 And let's not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another...

Community isn't just something that we try to fit into our Christian life after we get everything else together. Community is everything. Community will challenge us, encourage us, help us stay accountable.

Romans 12:9 Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what's wrong. Hold tightly to what's good. Love each other w/ genuine affection; take delight in honoring each other 11 Never be lazy but work hard; serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble; keep on praying 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God'll bless 'em. 15 Be happy w/ those who are happy & weep w/ those who weep. 16 Live in harmony w/ each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. Don't think you know it all! 17 Never pay back evil w/ more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you're honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace w/ everyone.

The whole Bible clearly teaches that people are made for community. God desires His people to experience a high quality of relational life. This seen in the "one another" commands of the New Testament. These verses provide the pattern for how to experience great relationships. They also demonstrate all the different ways we need others, and the value relationships can have in our lives.

*The phrase one another/each other occurs over 100 times in the N.T.

Live in peace with each other **Mark 9:50**

We belong to one another **Romans 12:5**

Build each other up **Romans 14:19**

Live in complete harmony with each other **Romans 15:5**

Accept each other **Romans 15:7**

Agree with one another **1 Corinthians 1:10**

Care for each other **1 Corinthians 12:25**

Serve one another **Galatians 5:13**

Beware of destroying one another **Galatians 5:15**

Don't be jealous of one another **Galatians 5:26**

Don't provoke one another **Galatians 5:26**

Bear one another's burdens **Galatians 6:2**

Be patient with each other **Ephesians 4:2**

Be kind to each other **Ephesians 4:32**

Submit to one another **Ephesians 5:21**

Don't lie to each other **Colossians 3:9**

Forgive each other **Colossians 3:13**

Teach and counsel each other **Colossians 3:16**

Encourage each other **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

Do good to each other **1 Thessalonians 5:15**

Don't speak evil against each other **James 4:11**

Don't grumble about each other **James 5:9**

Pray for each other **James 5:16**

Confess your sins to each other **James 5:16**

Be hospitable to one another **1 Peter 4:9**

Be humble toward one another **1 Peter 5:5**

Godly community makes a difference. When we live this way, people want to be together because they 're experiencing encouragement, care, help, correction, comfort, motivation, home, belonging... And people notice; as we demonstrate Christ's love & grace in action, our community becomes an important factor in drawing people to Jesus.

A Word About Connecting w/ Different Generations

YOUNG PEOPLE/CHRISTIANS: 1 Timothy 5:1 Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. **2** Treat older women as you would your mother and treat younger women w/ all purity as you would your own sisters. **3** Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her.

OLDER PEOPLE/CHRISTIANS: Titus 2:2 Teach the older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, & to live wisely. They must have sound faith & be filled w/ love & patience.**3** Similarly, teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what's good. **4** These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands & their children, to live wisely & be pure, to work in their homes, do good, & to be submissive to their husbands. Then they won't bring shame on the Word of God. **6** In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely. **7** And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity & seriousness of your teaching.

A Word To SINGLES

2 Corinthians 6:14 Don't team up w/ those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner w/ wickedness? How can light live w/ darkness? **15** What harmony can there be between Christ & the devil? How can a believer be a partner w/ an unbeliever? **16** And what union can there be between God's temple & idols? For we are the temple of the living God.

1. Realize your relationship w/ God is the key to your future success.
(Seek God, Find contentment in Jesus)

2. Believe you are who God says you are.

Ephesians 2:10 AMP We're God's own handiwork, His workmanship, recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged & made ready for us to live].

3. Build solid, successful Christian relationships; both married & single

4. Keep your **priorities** right: Faith, Fitness, Family, Fellowship, Finance, Fun, & Frank (jk)

***Negative Marriage/Relationship Motives:** social pressure, loneliness, need, sex, kids, finances, security, self-esteem.

***Positive Marriage/Relationship Motives:** friendship, love, give, share, joy, excitement, commitment, Holy Spirit-led.

Our church here is moving forward. We're not waiting around for something to happen. By faith, we're growing by the Holy Spirit w/ the power of God. Our community's filled w/ people who are connected in relationships, not only to God but to each other. God's taking us (this church) to deeper places in our walk w/ Him, & He wants to take us to higher places of blessing in our life. But we can't get there on our own. At Kings Circle we're gathering people who want to know Jesus who are truly seeking to understand this Christianity thing. People at different levels of their faith who are hungry for meaningful, rich relationships. People who are devoted to worship, to prayer, to teaching, & to community.

There's power in a church that has connected relationships both w/ God & people. People who truly love each other & love being around each other. That type of church is contagious, powerful & effective because it leads people into a deeper relationship w/ Jesus.