

Committed to Community – Ecclesiastes 4:1-12

Last week I made a statement regarding being committed to serve. Hopefully, you remember that “our rewards in heaven reflect the life we live here on earth”. With this thought in mind as we continue our **COMMITTED** series, let’s consider what the Bible has to say about the significance of living in community. Why is it important for us to be *Committed to Community*?

We needn’t go far in the Bible before we find the origin of living together, in perfect harmony and in mutual care and love for one another. The first community was established by God in the garden. Initially, between God and Adam and eventually including Eve. We know from the first few chapters of Genesis that God intended for us to live in perfect communion with each other, with Him in the center. Unfortunately, this perfect creation of community was interrupted by sin and because of that sin, every relationship in community since, has been marred by the sins of man. What we need to make note of this morning is that God didn’t remove the concept of living together in community because sin was now part of the equation. He still desires us to live together in harmony and to care for and love each other; Physically and spiritually, with Him at the center.

Both Old and New Testaments speak frequently about how people were designed and created to live in community. Think even about our modern ideas for community. We live in neighborhoods or towns and for the most part, it’s in those geographical, physical areas where we find common backgrounds, common interests, and common thoughts about how and why we gather in the first place. One of the intrinsic characteristics passed along to us as creatures made in the image of God, is that we also desire to be in community with others. This foundational truth, found throughout Scripture, challenges us as followers of Christ to commit ourselves to living together for the purposes of providing support to one another, nurturing one another, and assisting one another as we grow and thrive spiritually.

Let me show you an example of how important being *Committed to Community* is from both the Old and New Testaments. There are many more than these, but these examples provide even more evidence that living in community is part of God’s grand design.

The writer of Ecclesiastes, who is technically unknown, but usually credited to King Solomon, shares with us that people are much better together than alone.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:1-12.

It was important for us to read all these verses because we need to understand the context of what is communicated in verses 9-12. In the first eight verses, we see the adverse effects associated with loneliness. The author wants us to recognize how dangerous this type of life can be. When I read through this, I understand it to say that when we go through life alone, we can eventually reach the point of no return where we see more value in our nonexistence than we do with our life. It also helps me understand that dark thoughts and evil thoughts are accentuated when we are separated from other people. Satan loves to get us alone in the dark. No matter how hard we work towards self-satisfaction, we must recognize that we will never be satisfied with loneliness. God knows this about us. He made us for relationship. He knows how important being committed to community should be in our lives.

This is the message found in verses 9-12. Two are better than one. Why? **Re-read verses 10-12a.** Simply put, we are better together. Take note of the phrase found here at the end of verse 12. *“a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”* Up until this point, we have been reading of single life or two in relationship, but now we see this phrase. How did we go from two to three? Remember how I mentioned God desires for us to live together with Him in the center. This phrase is an expression of that Biblical truth. When our relationships are connected by God, then it’s a relationship that cannot be easily broken. Living in community should be part of who we are as Christians.

The early church recognized this and understood the importance of including community living in their daily lives. **Read Acts 2:42-47.** When we read these verses, we discover that the early church knew they had a responsibility to each other, but also to those around them. They were able to provide us with a picture of living in a community while living in community. Inside their church community they were able to show unity, mutual love and concern for each other, experience close fellowship, and when necessary, share belongings with each other. I love the fact that God’s faithfulness and blessings was given to them. Their commitment to community had a tremendous impact on many people. Their obedience led to the

Lord increasing their numbers “day by day”. If we want to experience genuine church growth, then we must learn to live together in this community, this body, while being an influential part of a community.

We don't have time to address it this morning, but all the great teachers of the New Testament; Peter, James, John, and Paul provided us with examples depicting “right” community living. It reminds me of **Galatians 6:9-10** from Paul. If we desire to do good for others, then we must decide to be *Committed to Community*. We need to follow the teachings of Jesus and be like salt and light. People in Lake Becky and in Mountain Rest need to see you and us as a beacon of light steering them away from the dangerous rocks of life. They need to know that Mt Freedom Baptist church is not a threat, but serves as a purifying, life-preserving, and flavorful influence into their lives and their community. They need to see us demonstrating all the Chris-like things the great teachers have taught us. Are we committed to humility, gentleness, kindness, compassion, cheerfulness, purity, patience, tolerance, peace, unity, service, burden-bearing, and of course, the greatest of all, LOVE?