
One Another - Introduction

Acts 2:42-47

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Acts 2:24-27

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.

We are both an organism and an organization.

- Organism - We have a spiritual life and growth that can only come from God.
- Organization - We have a basic form and structure that is defined by the Bible.

We have Biblical metaphors that help us think about this.

- Body metaphor – the Bible describes the church as ligaments, joints, bones, skeleton and muscles as well as body parts (members).
- Vine metaphor – the Bible describes people and the church as root, fruit and trellis.

We have a responsibility to do what God calls us to do:

To grow in the mission as a Commissioned people - to make disciples till the end of the age.

Matthew 28:17-20

And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

To build a simple trellis with effective structures and strategies for the sake of the mission. A trellis is a framework or structure for the vine to grow up on. Otherwise, the vine will collapse and grow along the ground. There it will not thrive. It will be vulnerable to vermin. Its fruit will rot. But a trellis allows the vine to grow upward, strong, safer and bear-

ing a full harvest of fruit. The church's Biblically mandated trellis is very simple. And there is a freedom in wisdom to build strategies and structures to carry out the mission. So we have elders meetings, various gathering times, Bible Education hour, worship teams, media, administrative structures and so on. However, these should not be seen as the essential life of the church, but rather support the life and fruitfulness of the church.

We have the privilege of experiencing and expressing the growth God gives:

Corporate growth as God adds to our number according to His will (Acts 2:47; 5:14; 11:24).

Acts 2:47

[They were]... praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Personal and corporate growth as God causes us to grow into spiritual maturity

Ephesians 4:15-16

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

We live, worship, serve and suffer together as God's people. The New Testament is full of key commands that guide guard and grow that life. These are clustered around the "One another" statements. For the month of September, we will be looking at six categories of these one-another commands from the Bible.

Our Life Context

Why are we doing this series?

Our Impetus

In September we usually have a series that relates to our life or serving together as a church. These have often come out of our annual Elder's Retreat. We gather to think though our lie together as a church to strengthen our understanding of who we are and what we do.

In our spring retreat, the Elders were thinking through how to conserve and preserve what God has created and given us here. We were prepared to

Our Challenge

How do we maintain and conserve what is good and enduring yet leave much room for greater growth, transformation, new understandings, and wiser strategies? Not through developing all kinds of new structures, strategies and succession plans. Rather through the affirmation of our identity and through the preaching of the Word. Teaching not only brings things into existence, but it sustains the life of the church in all that God intends.

Our Initiatives

Out of two days of thinking, praying and discussing, several important initiatives emerged.

Our Core Identity Documents

We affirmed our present formational documents as shaping the future of the Chapel. *The Book of Faith and Order* and our *Mission, Vision and Purpose* statements will preserve a Biblical ministry, but yet serve under the Scriptures.

Our Ministry Organizing Documents

We began a process of reviewing all of our Ministry Organizing Documents, identifying ministries where the work on them was incomplete.

Our Biblical Community

We realized that what we prized and wanted to preserve most is our life together. It is embodied in the one another statements. It was the loving, caring, sacrificing, serving, teaching, admonishing, edifying, enabling community we wanted to see the Chapel becoming now and far into the future. But that is what we can easily lose, is very fragile and cannot be legislated.

Let's think about these together...

Our Core Identity

We are on mission with one another - we share an identity.

As a gathered body we share the identity that the Word of God gives us. We also must say that identity to ourselves and to our world in ways that are congruent with the unchanging Scripture and communicate to a changing culture.

Our Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement is our personal and corporate way of saying the mission God has given to us. It reflects our understanding of being a Commissional church.

By God's grace and through His Word,
we will cultivate in the hearts of God's people
a passion for the supremacy of The Lord Jesus Christ
magnified in love for Him,
manifested in love for one another
and multiplied by love for the lost.

Our Vision Statement

This is a clear, challenging and compelling picture of what we aim for the ministry to look like. This is what we want to see in our mind's eye when we think of the chapel. It is our theological substance taking visual form.

Savoring the Supremacy of God

Our vision is to magnify God as the all-satisfying object of the believer's life in worship and service, here and forever.

Studying the Word of God

Our vision is to work out both the large picture and the immediate texts in Holy Spirit enabled exposition and application in the public and private ministry of the Word of God.

Shaping the People of God

Our vision is to see minds, affections, and wills transformed by the Word of God so that God is magnified by an obeying faith in every sphere of life.

Spreading the Gospel of God

Our vision is to proclaim the gospel to all the people groups so that God is glorified in every tribe, language, and people group.

Our Purposes

This is a larger statement of our aims expressed in intention verbs. It establishes the three major spheres of ministry defined by Scripture and implemented in our ministry structures.

Exaltation - Our Doxological Purpose

Exaltation is all that we do in terms of pursuing God in worship. This is the overarching purpose of the church. The church exists to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Edification - Our Discipleship Purpose

Edification is all that we do to know God better, to please Him in every facet of life, to learn, believe, understand and obey the Scriptures fully, and to love God and one another in each sphere of life as we grow in Christ-likeness.

Evangelism - Our Declarative Purpose

Evangelism is all that we do to proclaim the gospel to every people group in order to see all of God's elect brought into His Kingdom.

Our Values

Exaltation

Values Relating to Spiritual Atmosphere

Magnifying the worth of God in every thing that we do

Going hard after God together as an all-satisfying goal in Himself.

Being shaped by the Scripture as the fully sufficient and trustworthy revelation of God.

Treasuring truth as essential for engagement with theological controversy.

Making prayer the visible engine of all our efforts in worship and ministry.

Being humble and teachable by the Word of God so that we are constantly being stretched and sharpened in our grasp of God's Word and truth.

Recognizing the role suffering, self-denial and self-discipline must have in refining and maturing for effective ministry.

Values Relating to Corporate Worship

A public worship form that communicates the supremacy of God in all of life.

A sustained sense of lingering worship culminating in fervent, life-related, Biblical exposition attended by the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Music in our worship which is both God-centered and God-ward and is an expression of the diversity of believers among us.

Being a singing people who, by the Word and the Spirit, make a joyful noise to the Lord.

Understanding that in singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, we are to edify, encourage and admonish one another.

Edification

Values Relating to our Life Together

Increasingly visible, authentic, practical ways of loving one another.

Eager openness to new people and organized efforts to incorporate them in the life and ministry of the church.

The importance of small groups (Flocks) for building caring, faith-sustaining relationships and accountability.

Building lasting friendships as partnerships in cultivating holiness, ministry, and maturity.

Being vulnerable and transparent in our imperfections so as to encourage candor and openness for change and growth.

Strategizing and laboring to bring about spiritual formation at all ages aimed at cultivating a knowledgeable, sacrificial, serving maturity, enabling them to be salt and light at all levels of society.

Giving attention and emphasis to bringing up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Developing youth through a discipleship that excites and equips them for mature Christian living.

Providing Bible teaching for adults in a class setting that stimulates Bible reading, memory, and learning.

Building strong marriages that model the relationship between Christ and the church.

Emphasizing the mentoring role of the mature saints.

Being engaged with other Christian leaders who sharpen, stretch, challenge and further our understanding of God and His Word.

Values Relating to Church Ministry

The spiritual shepherding and leadership by elders.

The diaconal care of our people and service-related ministries.

The importance of Biblical Counseling for all of life, particularly the development of our Biblical Counseling Center as a place to train effective Biblical counselors, offer hope and help to sin-laden people,

Use, with excellence, of the spiritual gifts given to all the members of the congregation in ministries of worship, discipleship, service and evangelism.

Efficient administrative structures shaped by the Word and sustained by prayer.

Openness and integrity in the wise use of the financial resources given by God's people.

Full participation in the stewardship of proportional giving by every household.

Evangelism

Values Relating to Christian Mission

Continuous evangelism through God's providential network of relationships in our lives.

Periodic evangelism through special events designed to make contact with the community and create opportunity for the gospel message.

Regular evangelism through the public preaching of the Word in the context of the worship of God's people.

Challenging, training, sending and supporting missionaries locally, nationally and globally who affirm our doctrinal distinctives and evangelize the lost, edify God's people or equip God's people for ministry.

Supporting ministries who serve to support and strengthen the work of God worldwide.

Sharing with other churches our vision and doctrine to encourage their efforts in Biblical ministry.

All of these are intended to express who we are and what we are becoming as a church. They are written so as to serve according to principles. These principles establish a trellis for the growth given us by the Spirit. They form the structure for life. It is our hope that they will also preserve the ministry. Yet they are written so that future leaders and servants in the church have freedom to create and modify current strategies. In other words, in 2025,

the Chapel will be a mature, wiser, deeper version of who she is now. But the way ministry is done may look quite different.

Our Biblical Congruity

We believe with one another - we share the faith.

Truths We Treasure

So there are truths that we treasure as foundational for our unity. We will submit to these and grow in them as these truths shape our life with God and one another.

Truths We Teach

There are the truths we teach. This is a living document, a summary of our understanding of the Bible. This is one of the projects that we need to work on. Eventually, we want this document to reflect a our commitment to a Canonical, Redemptive-Historical view of the Bible and doctrine.

Distinctives We Affirm

There are Word of God, Will of God and Wisdom affirmations that distinguish us. They are our understanding of the Bible that marks us out from other churches. Some of these distinctive ideas are:

- The Sufficiency of Scripture
- The Centrality of Christ
- A New Covenant Theology
- The Sovereignty of God over all things
- The Gospel for our Salvation and Transformation
- Regular Exposition of the Scriptures as sufficient for all of life and godliness
- Biblical holiness as an expression of Spiritual life, not the Law
- Eldership plurality and parity with elder governance with a high value of shepherding of God's people by the Elders
- Every-member ministry, Biblical discipleship and crises discipleship as counseling

These are a few. There are others. Just from these you can see that the Chapel is both unique and yet connected to a great band of like-minded fellowships.

Our Shared Community

We live with one another - we share the life.

God's Design

God has called us to live together as his people. This does not mean on a property or compound. We are a called out people, a community connected by our life together. God

expects us to respond to one another in a way that is pleasing to Him. Many of the one another texts *tell us how to resolve conflict and be reconciled to one another*. The assumption of the Scriptures is that there is nowhere else to go.

The one another's are primarily about community. So I will not spend any time talking about them. And almost all of them are commands. They are commands that flow from who we are. Since we are these kind of people, then we ought to treat each other this kind of way. So, our life together as God's people is expressed by believing God's commands in an obeying way.

Our Exhortation

A personal exhortation: I know many of you do not come to Sunday Evening gatherings. I am firmly convinced that you will be missing one of the most important series of sermons we have done here. Yes, I know, you can get the manuscripts and the MP3's online. But that is not the same as sitting here with the community you are covenanted with to hear God's Word and to learn how to truly love one another. So, for the next four weeks, may I invite you, and yes, even exhort and admonish you to gather with your church family mornings and evenings so that our life together may be shaped and sustained by the preaching of God's Word.

Our Hopeful Continuity

We mature with one another - we share the future.

Its Priority

Here is why this is important. We are growing up in Christ *together*. Yes, there is a personal and individual aspect to that. But Ephesians, Colossians and Hebrews emphasize that we are growing up together, as people connected to one another by the Spirit who indwells us.

Its Progress

Living, learning and loving one another we making real progress in growing up in Christ.

Growing in the faith (doctrine) as we listen and learn from one another what the Scriptures teach.

Growing in stability as we affirm truth and deny error together being taught by the Scriptures.

Growing in purity as we live in love and liberty with one another according to the Scriptures.

Growing in maturity as we put into practice with one another what we are taught from the Scriptures.

Growing in members as God adds to the body through the evangelism we do in the gospel from the Scriptures.

Its Perfection

We will arrive. Yes, this is not a vain hope or impossible dream. In this world, through this age, we are on the journey together with one another. But one day, at the throne of God in the new heavens and new earth, we will all stand with one another praising and serving our glorious God. On that day, all of us, without sin, without tears, truly and finally one.

Reflect and Respond

So there is our hope and vision for the future. It begins now.

- We are on mission with one another - we share an identity.
- We believe with one another - we share the faith.
- We live with one another - we share the life.
- We mature with one another - we share the future.

May God be pleased to give us His grace so that we will glorify God with one another.

