

The Rationale for Deeper Relationships

Philemon 1:4-7

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“Lone Ranger” Christians are missing out on the abundant life God desires for them.

I. Regular prayer support is an invaluable part of the healthy Christian life. (v. 4)

I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers,

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (Acts 1:14)

Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones. (1 Thessalonians 3:10-13)

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people... (1 Timothy 2:1)

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. (Ephesians 6:18-20)

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. (Romans 15:30)

II. Love for God and for other believers is stimulated by interaction with fellow Christians. (v. 5)

because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. I long to see you so that I may

impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith. (Romans 1:8-12)

But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith. For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 3:6-8)

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Romans 15:5-7)

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. (1 John 3:23)

We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. (1 John 4:19-21)

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35)

III. Our spiritual growth occurs most powerfully when in close relationship with other believers. (v. 6)

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

You are generous because of your faith. And I am praying that you will really put your generosity to work, for in so doing you will come to an understanding of all the good things we can do for Christ. (New Living Translation)

and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ’s sake. (New American Standard)

[And I pray] that the participation in *and* sharing of your faith may produce *and* promote full recognition *and* appreciation *and* understanding *and* precise knowledge of every good [thing] that is ours in [our identification with] Christ *Jesus* [and unto His glory]. (Amplified Bible Classic Ed.)

I pray that the faith you share with us may deepen your understanding of every blessing that belongs to you [us] in Christ. (NET)

Sharing (NIV) / Fellowship (NAS): (Gr. - Koinonia)

1) fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, partnership, communication

1a) a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship

From Gr. Koinonos – Partner or sharer in anything

a) Instruction

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. (1 John 5:20)

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)

b) Application

Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other. (1 Corinthians 4:6)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22)

Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever— no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord. So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. (Philemon 1:15-17)

c) Accountability

This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. (2 Corinthians 13:10)

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

IV. We experience joy, spiritual assistance and strengthening when we are in close relationship with other believers. (v. 7)

Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me. (Philippians 1:25-26)

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. (Philippians 2:1)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Therefore we have been encouraged. And in addition to our own encouragement, we rejoiced even more at the joy of Titus, because all of you have refreshed his spirit. (2 Corinthians 7:13)

I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition. (1 Corinthians 16:17-18)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)

Small Group Goals:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (Acts 2:42)

- 1) Fellowship (food & sharing)
- 2) Spiritual Growth (study & discussion)
- 3) Prayer & Care