



First Things First Week 4: Fellowship

October 1, 2023

You cannot fulfill God's purposes for your life by yourself. You have to do it in relationship with other people.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 — "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart."

According to this passage, if we choose community, there are several benefits to our lives.

Working Together: Our lives are more productive

Ecclesiastes 4:9 — "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor."

We can get so much more done with others helping us. There is great power in doing life and ministry together with others. God put you on earth to do a mission, and He never meant for you to do your mission alone.

Living Together: Our lives are more positive

Ecclesiastes 4:10 — "For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up."

We need the input of others:

Proverbs 15:22 — "Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed."

Proverbs 11:14 — "Where there is no guidance the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory."

We experience more victory in our lives when we have close relationships with people who can give guidance for our lives.

Genesis 2:18 — "Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone...'"

This is the first thing God said after He created Adam.

God created both a physical family and a spiritual family. The physical family is the one you grew up in. The spiritual family is the one you have the rest of your life, that goes on into eternity.

Hebrews 10:25 GNT — "Let us not give up the habit of meeting together. Instead, let us encourage one another..."

We need other people in our lives in order to grow. Both large group worship and small group fellowship are essential, as outlined in the Book of Acts. God wants us to live in community with Him and with each other.

Loving Together: Our lives are more supported

Ecclesiastes 4:11 — "Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone?"

We all need support in life. We need material, emotional, and spiritual support. It's hard to keep going on this long journey called life without the proper support.

When you run alone, you run fast. But when you run together, you run far. — Zambian Proverb

Having other people in your life keeps you going when you feel like quitting.

Fighting Together: Our lives are more protected

Ecclesiastes 4:12 — "And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart."

Much like you'd ask your neighbor to look after your house if you were away, it's important to have people looking after your soul as well. Who is there to make sure that you're still growing? Who is there to encourage you when you feel like giving up? Who is there to

remind you of your blind spots and make sure you don't fall into the typical traps that mess us up?

Find a group of five or six believers who are committed to having your back, and who you are committed to as well.

1. Believe that Community is Important

God Himself exists in community. He made us in His image and invites us into community with Him and with each other.

2. Be Willing to Initiate

1 John 4:19 — "We love, because He first loved us."

God took the initiative and we are to respond. If you want to be loved, initiate love yourself.

3. Treat Others As You Would Have Them Treat You

The secret to making friends and building community is:

Matthew 7:12 — "...treat people the same way you want them to treat you..."

This looks like:

- Cutting others the same grace you would like them to cut you.
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- Overlook others' shortcomings like you would like them to overlook yours.
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- Say things that build up instead of tear down.
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- Encourage, motivate, and bring out the best in others.
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- Be trustworthy with things said confidentially.

Proverbs 11:13 — "He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter."

- Speak the truth in love. Be honest, even when it's painful.

I went out to find a friend, and he was not there.

I went out to be a friend, and friends were everywhere.