



## #2 "Come Together in Community"

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### Introduction and Background

I love Sundays because it is a chance for us as the Church of Christ to get together. For years, the church in general has lost sight of the fact that the building we meet in on Sunday mornings is not the church; we are the church. In the New Testament, the early followers of Jesus adopted the term "Ekklesia" to refer to themselves as the church. Originally, the term referred to a gathering of people coming together but eventually became used to describe the New Testament Church. It implies the idea of being "called out" and is almost exclusively translated as "church" in the New Testament. As we strive to be the church, we understand that we are called to a deeper walk together and we see how necessary others are in this walk. At All Nations Church, we refer to being together as the Warmth of our Caring.

But just what does it mean to truly care of other believers? Let's take a look at some of the roles we are to play in each other's lives when we come together as the church.

1. *Read Proverbs 27:17* – what does it mean for us to sharpen each other?
  - a. How do we do this in the context of Galatians 6:1?
  - b. What should our response be when someone helps to sharpen us?
  - c. What is often our response instead?
2. *Read Hebrews 10:22-25* – Here Paul is writing to Christian believers who were of Hebrew background. They are facing opposition and he could give advice and encouragement for them in many different ways.
  - a. What are the actions that Paul encourages them to do as the church? Keep in mind that in our day and age, we have become fixated on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. While it is a core tenant of our faith that you as an individual choose to follow Jesus, we are not called to follow Jesus by ourselves. Please take note how the language Paul uses all the way through the portion is corporate; "we, us" etc.
  - b. Paul ends this section with the words, "all the more as you see the day approaching". What day do you think that he is referring to? Why would it be important to maintain our meeting in community as we see that day approaching?
3. Take a look at *James 2: 14 – 17*. Here we see very practical ways that coming together in community helps others.

- a. Background - James equates faith with action. Historically, many people felt that James was actually trying to teach that you earn your salvation by doing good works which is contrary to the heart of the gospel. In reality, James is pointing out how true faith must motivate you to action and gives an example from the life of the church
  - b. One of the ways that we help each other is to take care of what? Read *Acts 2: 44 – 45* and see how the New Testament Church put this into action.
  - c. What are ways that we can do this today in such a way to empower others rather than enable them?
4. Going back to *Acts 2: 42 - 47*, we see other core things that the church did together.
  - a. List the things that they did in the temple courts and each other's homes. Find all the actions that they did.
  - b. What was the response to them living by these actions?
5. The list of ideas we have looked at so far is by no means exhaustive. From your own experience and understanding of scripture, what are some other things that we are to do as the church? Share those ideas and discuss them.
6. Understanding that we are wired differently, do some of these resonate more deeply with you than others? Do some of these roles in the community of believers stir your passions more than others? Going back to the message from Sunday, how do use the ways that we are wired to help bring harmony to the community of believers? What would be different if we were to do one of these things as a small group? As an individual?
7. One of the things that we intentionally did not discuss in this study is the role of mission. We are going to look at it in depth on Sunday when we look at "I love Sundays... because we have a shared mission". At All Nations Church, we would refer to this as, "The WORK of our hands." To finish your study, read the Great Commission found in *Matthew 28: 16 – 20* as a benediction and be ready to move with the community of believers forward into His Kingdom coming on earth as it is in Heaven

For extra reading from this week and next week, George Hunter wrote an incredible book called, "The Celtic Way of Evangelism." It focuses on the life of Saint Patrick and how he and his followers took the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Ireland and how the methodology he used hundreds of years ago could work for us today.