

Made to Do Life Together!

"Made For More" Series- Part 04

Share/Connect time: *When you review your life, what amazes you the most?*

An illustration for our life -

In recent years, researchers have found that social connections not only give us joy and purpose, they also influence our long-term health in ways every bit as powerful as adequate sleep, a good diet, and not smoking. Dozens of studies have shown that people who have social support from family, friends, and their community are happier, have fewer health problems, and live longer.

Research also indicates a lack of social ties has been associated with depression and later-life cognitive decline, as well as with increased mortality. One study, which examined data from more than 309,000 people, found that lack of strong relationships increased the risk of premature death from all causes by 50% — an effect on mortality risk roughly comparable to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and greater than obesity and physical inactivity.

Why do you think that spending time with others is beneficial to our physical health?

Today we will note that the early church practiced fellowship and Paul in his writings, stated that fellowship is not an option, but necessary to the body of Christ...the church!

Book: Acts 2:42-47 and Romans 12:3-8

Act 2:42 All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

Act 2:43 A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

Act 2:44 And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.

Act 2:45 They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

Act 2:46 They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—

Act 2:47 all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Rom 12:3 Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.

Rom 12:4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function,

Rom 12:5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

Rom 12:6 In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.

Rom 12:7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well.

Rom 12:8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Let's get into the Word:

How would you define the word "fellowship"?

In the New Testament Greek language, the words that are translated as fellowship, use the following four descriptive words:

- koinos and koinonia = Relationship and Partnership
- metocov and metoch = Companionship and Stewardship

To experience fellowship, discuss the importance of each descriptive word and how it would apply to fellowship as God intended:

1. Relationship (what is common or needful in that relationship?)
2. Partnership (what is the common goal in this partnership work?)
3. Companionship (in what ways might companionship be more intimate than a partnership?)
4. Stewardship (How can we be good stewards of **OUR** time, talent, temple, treasure, and truth with others?)

In your own words, what is the warning that Paul expresses in Rom. 12:3 and how might our refusal to heed the warning, be a detriment to our fellowship?

What does Romans 12:5 mean when it says we "belong to each other"?

How might different "giftedness", as listed in the above verses in Romans, influence our fellowship with others?

What are the possible results when we do not step up and serve as a part of the body of Christ?

A challenge to consider:

In what area of fellowship do you need to improve your stewardship?

Who has God put on your heart to increase your level of intimacy in fellowship?

What is your next action step with this person so as to fulfill the Spirit's prompting?