

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL

1. It Brings _____ Together
2. It Makes the Church _____ to others.

EPHESIANS 3:10 (NKJV)

“...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,...”

JEWS.

GENTILES.

TOGETHER.

ONE PLACE.

ONE LORD.

QUESTIONS

1. How do you define “success” for the network of relationships in your church?
2. Do you see the church’s goals for the next 5 years being in line with Ephesians 3:10? Why or why not?
3. What are some of your goals for SAF Community? Are your goals for community consistent with something only God can create? Or do your goals push you to a more “Gospel-Plus” type of community that can be created by humans alone?
4. How can we turn our “programs” and ministries and events into “community”?
5. What do you talk about iwth other church members outside the church? To what extent do casual conversations differ from what you’d expect to hear at a coffee shop or community park?
6. How many of your friendships at church would likely exist even if you weren’t a Christian?

Questions and portions of study guide adopted from Jamie Dunlop, “The Compelling Community”



the year of the
COMEBACK

WHEN YOUR SETBACK IS A SETUP

What is community in your church? Is it worship service at 11:00 on Sabbath morning? Is it Sabbath School? Is it Prayer Meeting and Pathfinders and potlucks?

Or is community a small group of friends that you like to hang out with and socialize with?

Does community happen for you outside the four walls of the church building?

In this COMEBACK series, I want to raise the bar on our understanding of what community is--in the church, and in the community. I want to explore how the church affects the community, and how the community affects the church.

How does the Gospel fit in? Does it impact community? Does it impact the church?

Also in this COMEBACK series, I want to lower your expectations for the church and community. Because, the Bible says that the church is built by God. That community is built by God. And while we may be responsible to feed, tend, and cultivate community, we risk subverting God’s plans for the church if we try to build it ourselves!

So, what is community?

COMEBACK

PREMISE #1:

You don't need _____ to build community in the church.

We tend to build communities that are built on similar life experiences, similar identities, similar causes, and similar needs. When churches are built and grow up based on these structures, we end up with a DEMOGRAPHIC congregation, not a GOSPEL congregation. In other words, most of us tend to church where we feel comfortable--not necessarily because we've been touched with the Gospel. Our natural human tendency is to community with people of similar nature and value.

PREMISE #2:

We tend to build _____ that would exist even if God _____.

TYPES OF COMMUNITY

1. The _____ Community

This kind of community is built on the Gospel PLUS something. The church is typically built on similiarites among the members of the congregation.

2. The _____ Community

This community would never exist EXCEPT for the Gospel. The church is full of people who have very little in common, and probably would have never met except for the power of the blood of Christ.

WHEN YOUR SETBACK IS A SETUP

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE CHURCH

Ephesians 2:1-10 (NKJV)

1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,
2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,

3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Note the Key Word of Ephesians 2:5-6:

Vs 5: "[He] made us alive _____ with Christ..."

Vs 6: "...and raised us up _____, and made us sit _____ in the heavenly places..."