

Growing Through Serving Together With God's People

By Craig Cochran

(All scripture quotations are from the ESV)

God's people today are those that have trusted Jesus to change them from the sin they once lived in and enjoyed to now be what He wants them to be! Galatians 3:26,28 says this: *"for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* There are no barriers that should keep us apart since Jesus died that we might be his "one" family!

Serving the Lord together locally with His people is His design!

The scripture shows God's people together in one place in the New Testament. The reason is because we are a family – God's family through faith in Jesus Christ. Listen to Acts 2:42-47: *"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,*

praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” They had some focuses when they were together. They focused on:

1) They focused on the scripture (the apostles’ teaching above).

2) They fellowshiped because they were together.

3) They ate together. A closeness is shown when people eat together!

4) They prayed together because they were in this together!

5) We find a focus when together in Acts 13:1-4 which is worship because there is one who is worthy of our worship forever who is Jesus! Listen to Acts 13:1-4: *“Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”*

6) There was also another focus and that is the leading of the Holy Spirit through the worship of Christ together! This was seen when it was determined by everyone through the Holy Spirit to send Saul and Barnabas on a mission.

Serving the Lord together for His benefit is His plan!

There are a few things that we are to do as a blessing to the other person who loves Jesus when we are together:

1. **Love one another.** We are commanded to love one another. As a matter of fact, the scripture goes to seed on this point. Jesus said this in John 13:34-35: *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*
2. **Build up one another.** We are a family because of Jesus and therefore should want the best for each other! Romans 15:2-3 says this: *“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”*
3. **Enjoy one another.** Listen to Romans 12:10: *“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”* Paul shows his enjoyment of fellow believers in many places. Listen to 2 Cor. 7:6: *“But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,”*
4. **Encourage one another.** We get discouragement from many different places in this cold world. We are encouraged to do the wrong things in many places in this world including social media, television, internet, radio and from people directly. But the one thing thing God’s people should be doing to each other is bring encouragement to serve Christ and believe His promises! Listen to Hebrews 10:24-25: *“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is*

the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

Serving the Lord together for His mission is His command!

We have a mission that we are told to do and we must do it together! We have a world that is in need of a relationship with Jesus through faith. THAT is the world's greatest need even though they don't understand it. Because Jesus has ALL authority he told us as a whole the following in Matthew 28:18-20: *“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”* We are like a beggar that has found some food and we need to take this food to the rest of the beggars that we know. Jesus said he will be with us for this very purpose that the Gospel might reach the furthest corners of our globe. We have his authority behind us and his presence with us to make disciples of all nations! The verb and command that says that we are to make disciples is plural meaning you all do this. We must do this together! As of this writing there are 3072 people groups in the world without a Gospel witness. Jesus said He won't coming back until all nations have heard the Good News. Listen to Mark 13:10: *“And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.”* (see also Math. 13:33) There are a lot of jobs that can't be done by one person that many have discovered but this job that we have to do is a big one and we can't do it alone. We must do it together!

Protect the fellowship!

Since Jesus made us a family through His blood, we should work FOR the fellowship of God's people! Listen to Eph 4:1-6: *"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:1-6".* We are commanded to affirm the fellowship of God people locally by working to maintain the unity of the Spirit. We are to encourage the growth of the fellowship through being present to do that. Hebrews 10:24-25 says this: *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."* Lastly we are called to never hurt the fellowship in any way since Jesus created the fellowship (church) through the high cost of dying crucified for it!

** All scripture underlines are mine*