

If We All Work Together, Together, Together....

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If you were with us last week, we looked at fulfilling our ultimate purpose, how we are called to be a worshipper of God, first and foremost. That is found in Matthew chapter 22, where Jesus says, **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment” (Matthew 22:37 – 38)**. That's our number one calling above everything else, to be worshippers. What is the chief end of man? It is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. And every aspect of our lives ought to be worship to the Lord. And so we talked about becoming what God is looking for, those worshippers, our highest calling.

I also made reference to our Mindset & Mission board that is in the foyer and mentioned three of them. We Seek God's Face, which last week's teaching was all about, We Serve God's People and We Proclaim Salvation. This morning, I want us to look at the second part of the three missional statements that I touched on, which is serving God's people.

That is a commitment to loving one another in our church family. Jesus gave us this new commandment in John chapter 13. He said, **“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” (John 13:34)**. But when Jesus talked about love, it wasn't just a sentiment. It wasn't just a feeling, because Jesus said, **“just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another”**. How did Jesus love us? He laid down His life for us.

And so loving one another really is not just a sentiment. It's practical love. It's working for each other's good. It is helping each other. Ecclesiastes chapter 4 and verses 9 and 10 says this, **“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. [10] For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! (Ecclesiastes 4:9 – 10)**. We need each other, amen? Two are better than one.

In Deuteronomy chapter 32 and verse 30, it says that when God's people are faithfully following after Him, one person will be able to put a thousand enemies to flight. Isn't that great? I mean, you know, if you've got God with you, you can put a thousand enemies to flight. But it goes on and it says something else. It says, two people together will put 10,000 to flight. Now that doesn't sound like good math, does it? If one can put a thousand to flight, you would think two could put 2,000 to flight.

But no, two can put 10,000 to flight. Why is that? Because there's exponential power when we come together in partnership, in fellowship, in unity together, so much more can be accomplished. There are so many scriptures through the Bible that emphasize this, the power of partnership, the power of partnership.

Jesus did not leave His great commission to any individual, not the most charismatic preacher on earth. He didn't leave it to the apostle Paul and say, you do it all, don't worry about anybody else. He didn't do it through one person, but He left His great commission with the whole church

together. The Holy Spirit is in partnership with the corporate “us” to advance the kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is God working with us together. So this morning, this is what I want to talk to you about, When We All Work Together.

And listen, this could not come at a better moment, especially as we approach September and all of the ministries relaunching and looking for volunteers. But let's go to the word of God together.

And if you have a Bible, you can turn to John chapter 13. So it's John chapter 13. And just to give you a little bit of a context for this, John chapter 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, record the final teachings of Jesus with His disciples right before His death. This is spoken the very night that Jesus was arrested.

Earlier in the evening, before they went to the Garden of Gethsemane, before He was arrested, He was locked away in that upper room in Jerusalem with His disciples. You know the scene so well, you've seen it depicted, you've read about it. But think about this, that night as Jesus was in that upper room with His disciples, there were seeds of division and individualism in the group.

Just think back a week before, they were on their way up to Jerusalem. And you remember James and John, two of the disciples, they kind of muscled up alongside Jesus and they said, “Jesus, we have a favor to ask.” In fact, one of the gospels says their mom was with them as well and said, “*We have a favor to ask.*” And he said, “*What is it?*” And they said, “*When you come into your kingdom, we want the thrones on your left and your right hand side.*” Wow. Talk about gumption.

It says the other disciples were ticked off. That's not the word in your Bible, but that's a good translation of the Greek. They were annoyed at what James and John said that night. They were being individualistic. They were looking out for themselves. They were looking for position and for some promotion.

And those two actually weren't the worst because by the time you get to the upper room, you find out about another character who was acting all for himself, Judas Iscariot. And Judas is just a terrible portrait, isn't he, of someone who was all about himself, individualistic and divisive. And it was absolutely critical that these things be dealt with in the group that night. They needed to get a spirit of unity together under the lordship of Jesus. They were about to go through a harrowing experience. And then when it was over in a few days' time and Jesus came back, they only had a very short period with him. And then the mission of saving the world was going to be on their shoulders. And so they had to get these things sorted out. So point by point through that evening, Jesus challenged their personal agendas and he prepared them to act as a unit.

And of course the centerpiece of that evening was a meal. It was the celebration of the Passover. We call it the last supper because Jesus ate for the last time with his disciples. And the bread and the wine that night in Jesus' hands became symbols of the death that he was about to die. He inaugurated this that we still celebrate as the church on a regular basis, like we did last week. The symbols of him laying down his life for the people in that room and for all who would believe on him to come.

That meal and what it symbolizes, the death of Jesus, that is the basis of our unity with every other Christian brother and sister. That's the basis of my unity with everyone in this room, your unity with

me, your unity with each other. Outside this room it's the basis of our unity with every Christian on all of planet earth and those who've already gone to heaven.

The basis of our unity is that we share the gospel together. We have been saved by the same grace, by the same shed blood. Thank God for that. What a unity we have at the very grassroots. This that brings us together. Now we're not going to read all five, six chapters here that tell this whole story of what Jesus taught that night, but we're going to flip and dip our toes in the waters of just three chapters, chapter 13, 14 and 15.

Because in these three chapters we can see a very different fundamental of partnership in each chapter. Working together in unity and partnership is our theme. There's a different fundamental of partnership in each of these three chapters and they're powerful fundamentals.

1) THE FUNDAMENTAL OF SERVING

Let's start here in chapter 13. The first fundamental of partnership is this, the fundamental of serving. I believe this is the most foundational fundamental of our partnership other than the fact that we are united around the shed blood of Jesus. In terms of practically how it is that we partner together, it begins with servanthood, the fundamental of serving. So John chapter 13, look at the first few verses.

“Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. [2] During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, [3] Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, [4] rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. [5] Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:1 – 5).

We know this scene. What an incredible act of humility, right? Jesus is the great example of servanthood, isn't he? The whole reason that Jesus left the perfection of heaven and came into this miserable world that's soaked in sin, cut off from God, the only reason that he came was to give his life as a ransom for us. He came as our Saviour to do what? The Bible tells us, to serve us. He came to serve us.

And you remember what Peter said a little bit further down in this chapter. Jesus is walking around washing the disciples' feet and he came to Peter and Peter objected. He said, *“Are you washing my feet?”* Number one, this is back to front. He said, *“But Lord, you are not going to wash my feet.”* And Jesus replied, he said, *“Peter, if I don't wash you, you are not clean. If I don't serve you, you can never be clean.”* He's talking more than about a bowl of water and feet, isn't he? He's talking about serving Peter by being his Saviour on the cross. *“I'm going to wash you, Peter, and unless I wash you, you'll never be washed. Unless I become your servant and do this, of which this is a symbol, unless I do this, you will never be clean.”*

What do we learn from the way that Jesus served his disciples?

A) JESUS SERVING HIS DISCIPLES WAS BORN OUT OF HIS LOVE.

Well, firstly, we learn that Jesus serving his disciples, washing their feet, all the things he did for them, and then dying for his disciples on the cross, all that he did in service was born out of his love. It came from love.

Look at how this chapter opens. We just read it there in verse one. It says, “**...having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (John 13:1)** Jesus loved them to the end. He loved Peter to the end. When Peter was in the courtyard denying him, Jesus loved him to the end. When the other disciples ran and Jesus was left to die alone, he loved them to the end. He even loved people outside of that circle. As they were nailing his hands to the cross, he said, “*Father, forgive them. They know not what to do.*” He loved them to the end. His love took him all the way. And it's that love that has him stooping down to wash their feet. Think about it. That was the most menial, the most undignified, the most humiliating task.

I wouldn't be thrilled about the idea of you washing my feet. And I don't travel the way those guys did. I don't walk in the filth that people did in the first century down the roads, where it wasn't just dirt, by the way. People tended to defecate and everything else on the roads. And you walked through all of that. Your feet were filthy. And when you came to your home at the end of your journey, someone would wash your feet. But do you know whose job that would be? It would be the job of the lowest slave in the house, the most lowly ranked servant. If you didn't have servants in the house, then you would have to wash your own feet. But you would never ask anybody else to do it.

But Jesus washed their feet willingly and gladly. He sat down. He volunteered to do it. He put the towel around his own waist. He drew the water himself, and he washed their feet. And Jesus longed that they would love each other enough that they would do the same for each other, that they would serve each other, these men that he had brought together as his body.

Why don't we find it easy or natural to serve a brother or sister in the church? Why do we struggle with that sometimes? I put it to you that it really comes down to our love. It really comes down to our love or our lack of love. Because here's the thing, the people we truly love, we find ourselves serving. We're happy to serve the person that we love. And you might say, well, I love others. I don't have anything against anyone that I'm aware of. I love people. Is that love? I don't have anything against them.

That's not love. That's tolerance. If you want to know how much you love someone, how far are you prepared to go to serve them, to put them first? Galatians 5 verse 13 says exactly what we're talking about this morning. It says, “**For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.**” (Galatians 5:13)

Serving is always an expression of our love. Unless you're being forced to serve, if you are a slave. But in the body of Christ, we're not slaves. We're called to freedom, but we're brothers and sisters who love and therefore we serve one another.

B) JESUS SERVING HIS DISCIPLES SHOWS HOW SELFLESS HE WAS

And then the other thing we learn from the way that Jesus served his disciples is how selfless he was. There was absolutely no holding on to power or position with Jesus, was there? Not holding on to his rights and who he was, no self-promotion. Listen, Jesus knew who he was. Jesus knew he was the sovereign ruler of all things, the heir apparent to all power in the universe. He knew he was the one who originally had spoken the worlds into existence. He knew he was the great king, and he was totally secure in that. Rather than try to clutch onto his rights, don't they know who I am? And listen, there are a lot of rabbis and religious leaders who wanted their disciples to run around after them.

Rather than be like that, Jesus bent down and voluntarily washed their dirty feet. Paul teaches on this very thing in Philippians chapter 2, and he says, Jesus voluntarily bent himself low, and God the Father has exalted him. I believe that God wants to use some people in this room in wonderful, wonderful ways, in his great plans. And if you knew all the plans that God might have for you, it'd blow your circuits if you knew them all this morning, what God really wants to do with people's lives. But whatever calling he places on your life, I promise you that the way to get there is downward. That's how God forms Christian leaders, anyone who does anything worthwhile in his kingdom, he takes them downward, humbling yourself.

Jesus said, whoever would become master among you, whoever would be a leader among you, whoever would take the front position, you must become least of all, be willing to serve everybody. The great enemy of the servant attitude is ourselves. And can I just say it this way? Until we can get over ourselves, we can't truly serve others. Until we can get over ourselves, we can't truly serve others.

Now, there is a great contrast to Jesus and his servant heart right here in this chapter, and we've already mentioned it. In John chapter 13, you read just a little bit further down, and you meet this other man, Judas Iscariot. He was a man who was just full of himself, and it ruined him. It destroyed him. Now, I know that it says here that Satan came and entered into Judas Iscariot that night, came and motivated him, but that was only because Judas had opened the door to Satan a long time before this.

In fact, if you go back to the previous chapter in chapter 12, John tells us that when anointing oil was being used on the feet of Jesus in Bethany, Judas spoke up and said, hey, that's expensive stuff. You know that that could have been sold and the money given to the poor? And John puts a little edit in there, and he says, Judas was not concerned about the poor. He said he was the one who carried the purse for the group, and he used to steal what was in it.

Judas was never about Jesus. Judas was always about himself, and he opened the door to Satan, and Satan sought him out. Shriveled up little Judas was full of himself, while in the same room, gigantic Jesus, the creator of all, was emptying himself over and over again. The contrast could not be more striking. He was a servant of all. So there's the first fundamental of partnership, serving.

God will be able to do great things through us. God will be able to do great things through this church as we love and we serve one another. So then we turn the page and we come into the next chapter, and that's John chapter 14, and we're shown another fundamental of partnership.

2) THE FUNDAMENTAL OF ENCOURAGEMENT

And fundamental number two is this. It's the fundamental of encouragement. The fundamental of encouragement. Isn't that a great word? How many of you love the word encouragement? It's a beautiful word, isn't it? Encouragement. Look at John chapter 14, and let's read the first few verses of this chapter. Jesus said...

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. [2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. [4] And you know the way to where I am going.” [5] Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” [6] Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:1 – 6)

Encouragement is a powerful thing, isn't it? We all know that from experience. If you've ever had a drop of encouragement given to you when you're discouraged, oh, what a precious thing encouragement is. And the Bible teaches that. The word encourage has two parts to it, doesn't it? “EN”, which is the prefix, and “COURAGE”, all right? En, courage, it means literally to put courage into. And when someone comes along and encourages you, doesn't it make you feel strong and emboldened, like you could, like you can go out and do the thing you were worried about? Webster's Dictionary defines encouragement as to inspire with courage and with hope.

Encouragement saves ministries. Encouragement has saved families. Encouragement, quite literally, can save lives. Who knows whether that person you encouraged and pulled them out of despair, who knows whether their life may have been lost if that word of encouragement hadn't come. I guarantee that's happened in life many times. Encouragement saves lives.

Hebrews 3 verse 13 tells us that we, as God's people, ought to, listen to this, encourage one another daily. That can't just mean Sundays, right? We ought to encourage one another daily. It's too long to wait Sunday to Sunday. An awful lot can happen in just 24 hours. We ought to encourage one another daily. Who'd you encourage today? Did you encourage somebody as you met them in the foyer? Did somebody encourage you? We need to be encouraging each other.

And that's a great reason for us to come together in midweek ministries or Wednesday Night Connection Groups so that we're not waiting a whole week, but we can find opportunities to encourage one another daily.

Here are the disciples on the night of the Last Supper, and the mood in that room is very, very somber. Because ever since they left Caesarea Philippi a few weeks earlier, they've been making their way to Jerusalem, and Jesus has been talking and saying that, *"When we get there, I'm going to be killed."* He said it. I've been reading it again in my devotions this past week. He said it multiple times to them. *"When we get to Jerusalem, they're going to take me and they're going to kill me, and the third day I'm going to rise from the dead."* He told them all about it.

And the disciples there in that room that night, they had a lot of fear and questions about the future. They couldn't understand what Jesus was talking about. And so far this evening, which should have been a celebration because it's Passover, it's gone from bad to worse. Jesus has just announced there's a traitor in the group. It's a dark night. It's a difficult night.

A) JESUS TEACHES US TO BE AN ENCOURAGER

Firstly, Jesus teaches us to be an encourager. Right in the darkness of this night, He models the power of encouragement. He teaches us how to be an encourager, and we need to listen to people. That's how you begin to encourage people, is you listen to people, just listening all by itself.

As you read through this chapter, you see all the questions that the disciples had and they asked Jesus, and Jesus entertained them all. I love that about Jesus. He never pushed away any question. Nothing was too hard or difficult or anything like that. He welcomed people's questions and He would listen to people. This is a great ministry of encouragement all in itself is to be a listening ear.

Some people think, I can't be much help to other people because I wouldn't know what to say. You see someone's going through a terrible thing and you say, I wouldn't know what to say. But very often, people are not expecting you to fix their problem. They just need someone to listen, someone to hear the doubts and the problem and the trouble and the question, someone who'll listen without passing judgment, without looking shocked. I mean, the worst thing you could do is someone says, "You know, I've got this problem. I've done this" and they go "AHHHH." That's not encouraging. That's terrifying. Oh man, it's worse than I thought.

But if you can stand and just listen to someone, no judgment, no looking shocked or anything like that. If you can just listen and show that you care, what a ministry that is. Look at all the questions that these disciples had.

At the end of the previous chapter, in chapter 13, Peter asks the first question. He says, *"Lord, where are you going? Why can't I follow you now? I'll lay down my life for your sake. I want to go with you. I don't understand what you're talking about."*

Get into chapter 14, verse 5, Thomas says, *“Lord, we do not know where you're going. How can we know the way?”* Verse 8, Philip says, *“Lord, show us the Father. That'll be sufficient for us. We just we need to see God.”* And then verse 22, you keep reading down, Judas, not Judas Iscariot, the other Judas, the good guy, Judas. Judas said, *“Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world? We do not know what you're talking about.”*

And they kept bringing these questions, and Jesus listened to them. To be an encourager, you need to listen.

B) WHEN YOU DO SPEAK, SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF HOPE

And then secondly, when you do speak, speak the language of hope. This whole chapter is filled with hope. Jesus just keeps bringing them back to hope. It's so full of life-giving hope. Everything Jesus says rings with a promise for the future. He opens the chapter with these words. **“Let not your hearts be troubled.”** Yeah, it's dark. You don't understand. Bad things are coming. It's going to be a tough few days. But let not your hearts be troubled.

And then he gives them reasons to have real hope. He tells them there's a plan. There's an end game. That we're all going to be in the Father's house soon. He tells them all of this. Everyone needs encouragement.

I've got to share something with you personally. For years, whenever anybody in church, not just this church but in previous churches, whenever someone would write me a note or write me a card and express something nice and give it to me, I wouldn't throw it away after I'd read it. But I would tuck it in a little file that I had in my filing cabinet called an encouragement file. Because sometimes people would give me a card or write me a note or send me an email when I was doing pretty good, when I was feeling great. But I knew I don't need that today, but next week I might need it. And I would tuck it away in that file, and I can't tell you how many times, how many days there were when I would open up that filing cabinet, pull out that file and open it up and just flick back through and you see the appreciation of people whose lives that you had interacted with. And you read that and it would change you.

You need an encouragement file like that. You need to be able to remember the ways that God's people have encouraged you. I was absolutely fascinated to read about what was found in the pocket of Abraham Lincoln on the night that he was assassinated. Have you ever heard this? What was in his pocket when they were preparing him for burial? In his pocket was the following contents. The first thing, a handkerchief that was embroidered, “A, Lincoln”. A pen knife that he had had since he was a boy and he used to use for carving sticks when he was a boy. An old case for his spectacles that he had repaired with string, it was so broken. A purse containing a \$5 bill. And the interesting thing about the \$5 bill was it was a Confederate \$5 bill. But he had a \$5 bill in his pocket.

And finally, here's the thing, some old worn newspaper clippings. They'd obviously been carried around for a long period of time. They were ripping and tearing. They had been read and folded and unfolded and read again many times. And what they were, were just a few good articles that had been written about him. Things that had been said about him that were positive. Because you know, today in the U.S., Abraham Lincoln is revered, but during his life, he was criticized. He weathered a lot of criticism.

You can just imagine, can't you, Lincoln sitting alone in the White House by lamplight in the evening, another tough day and difficult days of the Civil War and the criticisms being thrown at him. You can just see him pulling out those articles and reading them again because everybody needs encouragement.

That's what we're here for with each other is to encourage one another. I hope you'll be encouraged this morning. I hope that we can do that for one another. The first fundamental of partnership is serving, John chapter 13. The second fundamental of partnership is encouragement, John chapter 14. Let's be really quick. Turn the page one more time, chapter 15. One of the most beloved, the most preached on chapters in the whole Bible.

3) THE FUNDAMENTAL OF PRODUCTIVITY

And here we see a third fundamental of partnership. It is fundamental number three, the fundamental of productivity. John 15, verse one.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. [2] Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. [3] Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. [4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. [5] I am the vine; you are the branches.” (John 15:1 – 5a)

What a great passage. And you can go on and read the rest of that chapter. And here we see Jesus sharing the secrets to being fruitful in our lives. How many of you want to be fruitful in your life? How many of you want our church to be a fruitful church? Well, there's some keys here.

A) STAY CONNECTED TO THE VINE

And the first one is this, stay connected to the vine. Who's the vine? Jesus. We're gonna stay connected to Jesus. The whole point of the picture is that Jesus is the vine, we're the branches. He's our life source, he's our power source. And we cannot live and be fruitful unless we're connected to him. Jesus said, without me, you can do precisely nothing. He didn't say, you can only do a little bit. He said, nada. He said, zero. Without me, we need to be connected to him.

If you've been struggling to bear fruit in your life, the fruit of the Spirit, or to do the fruits of good works, or to lead somebody to Jesus, all that good fruit that should come out of

our lives, the first thing that you should examine is your relationship with the vine. So you wanna lead people and be fruitful in leading people to the Lord? *“Well, maybe I should take some evangelism training.”* That'd be good, but first, are you connected to the vine? Are you connected to Jesus? That's it, all the evangelism training in the world would do no good if you're not connected to Jesus.

You need to be connected to the vine, and you will just start to bear fruit. So seek God every day, fall in love with Jesus, build your devotional time until it's alive and flourishing every day, and watch how you start to bear good fruit.

As you read through this chapter, Jesus talks about levels of fruit. You read through it, he says, no fruit, some fruit, more fruit, much fruit. He says, no fruit, that is unacceptable. He says, you're meant to be bearing fruit. He says, some fruit, that'll happen when God begins to prune you in your life. Life can be hard, but God's bringing fruit out of your life as a result. So some fruit, then more fruit, he prunes some more.

And finally, much fruit, and he says, by this we glorify God, when God brings much fruit out of our life. You come down to verse 16, he says, **“fruit that remains.”** He wants to use you in ways that will last forever, things that will really count and matter.

B) STAY COMMITTED TO ONE ANOTHER

So first of all, you've got to stay committed to Jesus, and then stay committed to one another. As the body of Christ, stay committed to one another, because verse 12 says, **“this is my commandment, that you love one another.”** Jesus linked our fruitfulness with our partnership with each other.

We'll be fruitful when we're together. Christianity is not a solo endeavour; it's about teamwork, teamwork with God, and teamwork with each other. I wanna finish with one little story about a guy who tried to do it on his own.

He was on a building site, and he had to move 500 pounds of bricks from the top of a four-story building down to the sidewalk below. And he did it himself, and this is what he wrote on the insurance claim later on.

“It would have taken too long to carry the bricks down by hand, so I decided to put them in a barrel and lower them by a pulley, which I had fastened to the top of the building. I fastened the rope around the barrel, loaded it with the bricks, swung it out over the sidewalk for the descent. Then I went down to the sidewalk and untied the rope, holding it securely to guide the barrel down slowly. But since I weigh only 140 pounds, the 500-pound load jerked me from the ground, so fast that I didn't have time to think of letting go of the rope.

And as I passed between the second and third floors, I met the barrel coming down. This accounts for the bruises and the lacerations on my upper body. I held tightly to the rope until I reached the top, where my hand became jammed in the pulley. This accounts for my broken thumb. At the same time, however, the barrel hit the sidewalk

with a bang and the bottom fell out. With the weight of the bricks gone, the barrel weighed only about 40 pounds, thus my 140-pound body began a swift descent.

And still clinging to the rope, I sped towards the ground. I met the empty barrel coming up and this accounts for my broken ankle. Slowed only slightly, I continued the descent and landed on the pile of bricks. This accounts for my sprained back and broken collarbone. At this point, I lost my presence of mind completely and let go of the rope. And the empty barrel came crashing down on me. This accounts for my head injuries. As for the last question on the form, what would you do if the same situation arose again? Please be advised, I am finished trying to do the job alone.”

The fundamental of partnership. The fundamental of partnership is in serving one another, is in encouraging one another, in being productive together. God can do great things. And as I said earlier, we're coming to the fall and we really need each other. We could apply this every week of the year and we could apply it in a thousand ways. But we need each other this fall. So I wanna encourage you, just think about our partnership together.

Pray for one another any time you see someone up front here during Prayer For Needs. Any time you see someone who you think might be new, go up and introduce yourself . Maybe they've been attending for years but sit on the other side of the sanctuary. That's okay! The important thing is you've just connected with them, and you'll both laugh about it and it will unite you. If they are new, you've just encouraged them as they have felt welcomed. Let's work together and see what God will do.

Amen?