



“Rooted & Established” - Eph. 3: 17-19 (NIV)

“¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Growing isn’t always obvious, especially when the growing happens underneath the ground. Who doesn’t love to see the beautiful bloom of flowers or the vast height of towering trees. But do we ever stop to consider how that beauty came to be? Holding these incredible specimens of God’s creation are roots that go way below the surface to anchor these plants in place. But the roots aren’t pretty. They have weird shapes and go in all kinds of directions. Some are skinny and others are wide but they all have one thing in common. The roots are mostly unseen & most people don’t even think about them.

Did you know that there are generally 3 types of trees that grow? Fast Growers (5-8 feet/year) = maturity in 3-10 years (Eg. Poplar, Willow), Medium Growers (1-3 feet/year) = maturity in 10-30 years (Eg. Maple, Birch, Pine) & Slow Growers (less than 2 feet/year) = maturity in 50-100 years (Eg. Oak, Hemlock). It’s interesting that there’s such a variety of trees but each tree needs a strong root system in order for healthy growth to take place.

As a Youth Ministry, it’s been 7 years since the teens have had a retreat - a time away from home & dedicated to connecting with God & one another. An entire generation of teens from RCAC (approx. 6 years) finally had a God appointed opportunity to gather at Camp Capilano on Aug 21-23. As a leadership team, we’ve been so

encouraged to see God’s Spirit working quietly among the 27 youth (Gr 7-12) who were brave enough to step into this truly new adventure. While many of the teens were quite physically tired from leading kids at VBS (Aug 17-21), we immediately switched to retreat mode by 12:10pm on Friday - with a full focus on the teens’ needs. We continually witnessed God’s blessing - even before we stepped onto the site in North Vancouver. From the VBS Food Team pre-cooking meal items that could be re-heated (Eg. Banana Waffles), surprise gifts of finances, unsolicited offer to drive baggage, Transit Driver waiving fees for expired tickets, perfect weather for all of our activities & more than enough space for our return trip home in 2 cars God’s work was evident. But most of all was the growing connections that we witnessed among the teens as they unplugged from their phones (which were locked in my car) and were truly present with one another/God. The laughter was real, the sharing of chores (Eg. making food, washing dishes, cleaning the facility) were so wonderful to see among the group. God was present and growing us “Little by Little....” and that’s only describing the things that we could see. We focused on these 3 verses in Ephesians for the entire week-end but as we still can’t fully grasp how much Christ loves us. I’m mindful of those things which we can not see and pray that the hearts of each teen would continue to grow in maturity beyond the camp to root them in faith for the rest of their lives to love Jesus.

Since we don’t have x-ray vision like a superhero, as adults, we can be easily discouraged when we don’t see results happen as quickly as we’d like. The teen years can be challenging and it’s hard to watch young people make mistakes. But perhaps, as adults, we would be more understanding if we could see that there’s a bigger picture and instead pray the teens through the difficult chapters of growing deep roots of faith in Jesus. Just as there is a range of years to maturity for trees - it reminds me that we also need to allow teens opportunities to grow & develop their own experiences/root systems in Jesus. I’ve always loved trees, because they make me look up. The taller the tree, the more I need to bend back to look up and it reminds me to look to my Heavenly Father. May we all continue to mature in Jesus as individuals and together as a church family until we see Jesus’ face.