

**Biblical Community** is the result of a sincere commitment made by those who identify in having Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

“Community” is defined as “a group of people who have the same interest.”

The Bible word for community is fellowship... the Greek word *Koinonia* = *to have things in common.*

We could define “these same interests” and the “things in common” in a number of ways...

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|---|---------------------|
| 1. Glorifying God in everything we do   | 1 Corinthians 10:31 |
| 2. Making much of Jesus Christ  | Colossians 1:18     |
| 3. Submitting to God’s Word as our final authority for faith and practice     | 2 Timothy 3:16-17   |
| 4. Addressing our sins and failures through confession and repentance         | 1 John 1:8-10       |
| 5. Attending church services faithfully and purposefully                      | Hebrews 10:25       |
| 6. Using my God given spiritual gifts to serve and encourage the congregation | Eph. 4:11-15        |
| 7. By faithfully practicing forbearance and forgiveness towards others        | Ephesians 4:2, 32   |
| 8. Allowing the unsaved to see my good works that God may be glorified        | Matthew 5:13-16     |
| 9. Recognizing that every saved person is an Ambassador for Jesus Christ      | 2 Corinthians 5:20  |
| 10. Showing genuine love for my brothers and sisters in Christ                | John 13:34-35       |

*(John used the word “love” over 35 times in 1 John.)*

*If we are being intentional about community and community means to “have the same interest” then what we just looked at should be embraced by every member of Grace Baptist Church.*

- When we practice Biblical community God gets the glory and we get the joy!

“I have oft said that the sole cause of man’s unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room. What people want is not the easy peaceful life that allows us to think of our unhappy condition, but the agitation that takes our mind off it and diverts it.”

Blaise Pascal 1623-1662

*1 John 1:3-4 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. (complete, satisfied)*

The Call to Connect with Community is in verse 3, that “**you may have fellowship with us**”. Two main purposes of Community are given in verses 3-4 – the source of our fellowship is God and Jesus Christ and it is about how you find fulfillment in life (that your “joy” may be full)

**Threefold Theme of 1 John:** (1) **Connect to Community** - Through Commitment. (2) **Build Community** – Through acts of love. (3) **Protect Community** – Knowing how to identify and reject false teaching.

**Community (AKA – Fellowship)** is divinely designed for various reasons that bring numerous benefits. The primary purpose of Community is to display God’s glory to a fallen and broken world and to show what true love really looks like.

When Biblical Community is practiced it is a Win Win Win Win!

(1) God gets the glory. (2) The believer gets the joy. (3) The congregation gets the encouragement. (4) The unsaved get a glimpse of God’s glory in the lives of those God has saved.

**1John 2:7-11** *Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. <sup>8</sup>Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. <sup>9</sup>He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. <sup>10</sup>He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup>But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

John moved from commandments in general (verses 4-6) to the specific command to love others. The command to love was Old in the sense “to love your neighbor as yourself” is in (**Lev. 19:18**).

The command to love is New in the sense that Jesus gave it a higher standard; not new as never taught before, but new as advanced and elevated, new in personal application and emphases.

John wrote that “loving others” is what helps up make progress in our own life versus stumbling and falling. (v10-11) **It matters to God** how we treat others within His family.

“...we are to love all true Christian brothers in a way that the world may observe. This means showing love to our brothers in the midst of our differences-great or small, loving our brothers when it costs us something, loving them even under times of tremendous emotional tension, loving them in a way the world can see. In short, we are to practice and exhibit the holiness of God and the love of God, for without this we grieve the Holy Spirit. Love-and the unity it attests to-is the mark Christ gave Christians to wear before the world. Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and that Jesus was sent by the Father.” F. Schaeffer

**John 13:34-35** *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

Difficulty #1: Practicing love within the local congregation to every believer

Difficulty #2: The various ways members define love. Romans 12:1-2

Our spiritual enemy fights hard in this one area of LOVE, because the stakes are high!

- It is about God being glorified.
- It is about believers finding purpose, meaning and joy in life.
- It is about the unsaved coming to an understanding of their lost condition and Christ’s power to save them!

**Spiritual Assignment:** Review the list of 10 things all believers should have in common (community) and prayerfully read the passages that are referenced.