

Fill Up! On Godly Relationships

Col 4:7-18

We're skipping a few paragraphs this morning

Might make some of you more obsessive-compulsive types shake

Reason – Launching SG's in two weeks

Last part of Colossians has much to say about godly relationships

The special kind of relationships that can happen between people united in Christ

The kind of relationships that SG's cultivate

Read Col 4:7-18

7 – *Tychicus* – one of Paul's closest associates, behind Timothy and Titus

9 – *Onesimus* – runaway slave that Paul took under his wing and led to Christ

10 – *Aristarchus* – one of the few who may have voluntarily spent time in prison w/ Paul

Mark – same one who split from Paul (Acts 15)

Instructions – left over from dispute?

Welcome him – to show all was reconciled?

11 – *The only men of the circumcision* – hint of disappointment that gospel hadn't been as readily embraced by the Jews

14 – *Demas* – same one who later deserted Paul for love of the world? (2 Tim 4:10)

16 – Passing letters around - indicator that even though many of the NT letters were written to specific churches/situations, they were intended for all believers, everywhere, including us

16 – *Letter from Laodicea* – either lost or preserved under different name (Ephesians?)

17 – *Archippus* – fellow soldier (Phile 2) to battle against opposition to gospel and church

Rich with characteristics of godly relationships

First, we see that . . .

Godly relationships are close and reliable

Close because you . . .

Value each other (beloved brother) – 7

Like each other (greet you) – 10, 14, 15

Serve side by side (fellow servant) – 7, 12

Strive for the same things in ministry

(Fellow workers for the kingdom of God) – 11

Identify with each other (one of you) – 9, 12

Reliable in . . .

Ministry (faithful minister) – 7

Get the job done; persevere through hardship; don't quit

We prayed for partners in this – faithful ministers

Life (faithful brothers) – 7, 9

Godly relationships are supportive and helpful

Supportive through . . .

Encouragement (that Tychicus may encourage your hearts) – 8

(Grace be with you) – 18

Comfort (they have been a comfort to me) – 11

Concern (remember my chains) – 18; Support me tangibly and prayerfully

Helpful through . . .

Hard work (Epaphras has worked hard for you) – 13

Prayer (always struggling on your behalf in his prayers) – 12

Do you labor in prayer for anyone?

Becky and I were terribly sick; had baby and young children; dehydrated; weak

Called a couple in our SG at 2 a.m. – need 7-Up and crackers; check on our kids

There in 20 minutes

They were close, reliable, supportive, and helpful

Godly relationships are focused and accountable

Focused on . . .

Maturity (that you may stand mature) – 12

Knowing God and his Word

Confidence – (that you may stand fully assured) – 12

Firm in their biblical convictions

You're accountable in godly relationships by . . .

Sharing your activities with each other (tell you all about my activities) – 7

Keeping it real (that you may know how we are) – 8

Giving and receiving feedback (fulfill the ministry you received) – 17

Godly relationships don't happen by themselves; need to be intentional

That's why we're so committed to SG's here at Harvest because . . .

Godly relationships form in Small Groups

SG's are the best way to foster godly relationships

SG's are a biblical way to foster godly relationships

- We know this because . . .

Jesus formed godly relationships in the context of SG's by making disciples

Mk 9:2 – 3; Mk 3:13-14 – 12; Lk 10:1 – 72

- The early church formed godly relationships in the context of SG's

Acts 5:42; 2:44-46 – met in the temple courts and house to house

- Churches around world continue to form godly relationships in the context of SG's

In good times – South Korean church of 1m; meet to worship in SG's around computer

In bad times – Met pastor at banquet; from Uganda under Ide Amein

Brutal dictator; bull dozers clearing bodies on streets one time

Despite the prohibition otherwise, they met secretly at night

Schedule for different house each night; different pairs to arrive at different times

Sometimes pray all night and then go to work – tireless!

Many of you could bear witness to the godly relationships that you have formed in SG's

Another reason we're committed to SG's here at Harvest, is because . . .

Godly relationships grow in Small Groups

- They grow when ministry is exchanged

All the ministry doesn't come from the leader to you – It's a two way street

Not like the spoke of a wheel, but a spider web – **photo**

Ministry is exchanged when we . . .

Practice the one another's of Scripture

Spurring one another on to love and good deeds – Heb 10:24

Encouraging one another and building each other up – 1 Thess 5:11

Exhorting one another daily – Heb. 3:12-13

Teaching one another and admonishing (warning) one another – Col 3:16

Confessing your sins to one another and pray for one another – James 5:16

Bearing one another's burden's – Gal. 6:2

Loving one another – John 13:34-35

Godly relationships grow in SG's when ministry is exchanged

But doesn't happen unless . . .

- We belong together in mutual partnership

1 John 1:7 – *If we walk in the light, as he [God] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

Fellowship – koinonia, belonging together in mutual partnership; community

In Christ, we not only belong together, we belong to each other

Rom. 12:5 – *In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

Godly relationships grow in SG's when ministry is exchanged

Godly relationships grow in SG's when we belong together in mutual partnership

And Godly relationships grow in SG's . . .

- When we devote ourselves to them

Acts 2:42 – They devoted themselves to . . . fellowship

That means participation, not just association

You associate on Sunday mornings – You participate in SG

The church is not intended to be a hotel where we live under the same roof, but our interactions are superficial and sparing at best

We need to devote ourselves to belonging together

Getting involved in each other's lives

One author says it this way . . .

“People often approach small group involvement with a mindset that says, ‘Come if you can. Leave when you must. Should things get inconvenient or messy, you can always bail out.’”

That's not participating or belonging together or getting involved in other's lives

That's associating

- When they're based on truth

Involvement in each other's lives must be based on truth . . .

Otherwise it's a group session of shared ignorance where everybody walks away feeling good about it!

Read story about Christian doctoral student who took course on group counseling at a secular university (Building a Church of SG's by Donahue & Robinson, 75-76)

Part of the class was an “encounter group” which he describes like this . . . (read)

The undercurrent of the entire Bible shows us that the best means of relating to God is to hear His message within the give and take of a close-knit community

A community who strives to *understand* the Scriptures, *apply* them in their life, and hold one another *accountable*

That requires belonging together in mutual partnership so that ministry can be exchanged, biblical truth sought, and godly relationships grow

We're committed to SG's at Harvest because . . .

Godly relationships multiply in Small Groups

- By adding more people to the group

We're not the frozen-chosen!

Need to constantly reach out and invite others

Tendency is to be selfish about what you have and keep others out

But many more people need the same thing you have in SG

- By developing leaders

We're told to

2 Tim 2:2 (Paul to Timothy) – *What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*

It's our responsibility

Eph 4:11-12 – *He [Christ] gave pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ*

We need to

To handle the growing needs – it's already too much for just a few to carry

Jethro principle from Ex 18:13-36 is appropriate – Identify capable, godly, trustworthy men to do the work of ministry

To seize the opportunity

We have 160 already signed up!

To use God-given leadership gifts

It's poor stewardship if you don't

The ministry of SG Leaders at Harvest is that of a shepherd and leader, not necessarily a teacher

They're not going to pontificate

They're not the Shell Answer Men

They *are* going to challenge you to consider the truths of God's Word . . .

They are going to urge you to apply what you are learning/reminded of

By identifying/developing capable leaders, the capacity for godly relationships multiplies

Q&A

When do they start?

First week of February

When do they meet?

Various nights, but most will meet on Thursdays to start with

Where do they meet?

In homes

How do I get in a SG?

If you haven't already signed up and been contacted, fill out the SG insert

Give to an usher or drop it off at Info Table

Summary

Don't miss out on the . . .

Formation, Growth, and Multiplication of Godly Relationships here at Harvest

Godly Relationships that are . . .

Focused and accountable, supportive and helpful, close and reliable

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