



“Be devoted to one another as brothers and sisters. Honour one another above yourselves.”
Romans 12:10 (NIV)



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TODAY'S SERVICE

- *Opening Songs All together
The Rescuer
The Mountain
- Welcome & Notices Pene Sarjeant
- Offering All together
- *Singing All together
This I Believe
Only King Forever
High Above
- Prayer Deo Vistar
- Scripture Reading Kirsty Baldwin
Romans 12:9–21
- Message Deo Vistar
Why We Need Each Other
- *Closing Song All together
How Marvelous
- Prayer & Blessing Deo Vistar
- *Led by the Music Team: Garry (leading), Jonathan (guitar), Bronwyn (keyboard), Kirsty (singer), Nelia (singer), Lynette (projector), Andy (sound)
- ✦ If you have any questions or need help, please ask one of the welcomers who will be happy to help you.
 - ✦ If you would like prayer after the service today, ask the people around you or come to the front and someone will pray for you.
 - ✦ A crèche is available for parents with little children. The service is relayed into the room so you are able to listen to it. Please ensure the room is left tidy.
 - ✦ We invite you to stay for a cup of tea after the service.

PASTORAL NOTES

Kia ora! Welcome to our worship this morning. If you are a first-time guest, I encourage you to fill out a blue visitor card and hand it to the welcomers or drop it in one of the offering bags.

One thing I appreciate about the church is community, genuine and rich community. Certainly not perfect, but growing. As the Lord Jesus has loved and accepted us, so we love and accept one another, and we truly care for each other. And we extend this love and grace to any newcomer who comes to our midst.

The early church was characterised by genuine community, among other things. Consider this passage in Acts 2:42–47:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

This sort of community in the early church was not the work of the flesh; it was supernatural – the work of the Holy Spirit. And did you notice that as the church practised this genuine community, they numerically grew as well? I'm reminded of Jesus' words: "By this the world will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34).

In the next several weeks we will be focusing on the whole idea of building up and nurturing community. This is not merely about having group meetings and events. It also has nothing to do with the size of our church or group. It's about the quality of our relationships. We know that genuine community can only take place and flourish through the Holy Spirit's help. Thus let's ask God's blessing

so we may hear His voice and be granted the will to obey His Word. In conjunction with the sermon this morning, please prayerfully read the article below. Blessings in Christ, Deo.

NURTURING AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY¹

By Justin Deeter

How can we help create a culture of authentic community in our church? How can we help build meaningful relationships with other Christians for the mutual building up of the Body? Let me share with you six ways.

1. Be Intentional

Go deeper through perceptive questions. Rather than a quick “Hello! Pretty cold weather today,” ask questions that encourage people to open up. “How have things been going this week?” or “How is your mom who has been fighting cancer?” or “What can I be praying of you this upcoming week?” or “What has God been teaching you recently through His Word?” Ask questions that allow you to dig deeper that creates opportunity to encourage and remind one another of the Gospel and its implications.

2. Be Hospitable

Find opportunities to invite others into the rhythm of your life. If you are running to the store, invite someone to go along with you. If you are making a delicious apple pie for dinner, invite someone over to enjoy it with you. Invite people into the routine of your life, all the while being intentional in your conversations, going deeper together in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. Be Available

Community cannot be manufactured through planning. Sometimes there may be a friend who needs you to drop what you’re doing and pray with them. There may be a crisis such as a death in the family that they need your support. Someone may have had a terrible day at work and they need a

friend to talk to that night sharing their sorrows. If we are going to foster community in our lives and in our churches we must learn to be less busy. We must learn to not so over schedule ourselves that we don’t have time to be available for those who need us. Intentionally leave time open and unscheduled so you can drop what you’re doing and be there for others.

4. Be Teachable

Some people seem to think they have it all together. You start talking about an issue, and they seem to have it all figured out. Yet, in genuine Gospel-community everyone should take a posture of humility and teachability. We have a lot to learn from one another and others may be able to see blind spots that we are missing. If we come across as unteachable and prideful, then community will be non-existent. Go to others for advice or counsel. Ask others how they would handle the situation you’re facing.

5. Be Forgiving

When we enter into deep and authentic relationships with other believers, we leave ourselves exposed to be hurt. Oftentimes other people may say something that deeply wounds us. When those times happen it is vital that we be quick to offer forgiveness. If we sit and allow others’ offenses to fester, the poison of bitterness creeps into our hearts, eating away at our soul. So when others hurt you be quick to forgive and quick to seek reconciliation.

6. Be Vulnerable

You have to be willing to let down your guard and open up. It’s scary, it’s risky, it’s terrifying, yet essential for Gospel community. Be courageous enough to let people see the real you. Share with a sister in Christ about a struggle you are facing. Be aggressive in asking for prayer from a good friend. Share the struggles of your heart or encourage another with a difficult lesson God has taught you in the past. When we let down our guard and are vulnerable with one another, authentic community is the result.

May these six things help you as you seek to foster authentic community in your life and in the life of your church. May we as Christians not settle for anything less than authentic, honest, and vulnerable community. May we be so bold as to find our identity and worth in Christ that the fear of man that so often hinders true community be put to death. As we throw our religious masks to their graves we will find the joy of that wonderful community of grace with which God has gifted us, the local church.

NOTICES

Prayer Meeting

Today 4pm at 7 Victoria Close. All welcome!

Looking Ahead

- 2nd May (Thursday) – Elders Meeting at 1pm at Church
- 10th May (Friday) – Tea@10 (Upper Lounge, Marina Cove)
- 12th May (Sunday) – Church Meeting (right after the service)
- 15th May (Wednesday) – Worship Service at Seaview Home, 10.30am
- 24th May (Friday) – Tea@10 (Upper Lounge, Marina Cove)

“Nations Bless Israel” Event

Christians joining to pray for Israel (note: this is not a political event). Live streaming direct from Victory Christian Centre in Auckland. Venue in Picton: Picton Library, 2 Dublin St. Date: 12th May (Sunday) 6.30pm. Contact: Pastor Julian Hawken 0210673045. All welcome!

Any Prayer Requests?

If you have any prayer request for the prayer chain, contact Pene Sarjeant at 5737785 or 021 118 0616.

¹ Slightly revised