

## Day 9 - Building Community

Christian community is not something that we stumble into. It requires effort and intentionality, but it is worth it when we experience the benefits of genuine and meaningful friendship.

How are you doing when it comes to intentionally making time to build relationships with others?

Our focus scripture for today is Philemon 4-7.

<sup>4</sup> I always thank my God when I mention you in my prayers, <sup>5</sup> because I hear of your love for all the saints and the faith that you have in the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> I pray that your participation in the faith may become effective through knowing every good thing that is in us for the glory of Christ. <sup>7</sup> For I have great joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.”

Little is known about Philemon, but how he showed love towards all the saints should be a great challenge to us today. Paul describes Philemon’s impact by making two simple statements. First, I, Paul, have great joy and encouragement from your love. And second, the hearts of all the saints have been refreshed through you, brother. When we intentionally show love towards others in the ups and downs of life, the Lord uses us, in a transformative way, to give joy to the hopeless, encouragement to the troubled, and refreshment to the weary.

Pause to pray... God, who have you placed in my circle of influence that needs a godly friend? How can I pursue them, encourage them, or show compassion to them?

As an invitation to a spiritual practice -- a way to say “yes, Lord,” with that person who came to mind, could you take the initiative to be the friend they need? If so, reach out, check on them, and ask, “how can I pray for you today?”

Prepare to walk with God into the day before us, the Lord who loves us says in:

Romans 14:19 “So then, let us pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another.”

Father, help us discern where you are leading us as a church - making Your invitation clear.

Jesus, help us become worshipers, friends, apprentices, and guides who live as disciple-makers in all areas of our everyday.

Spirit, help us become a disciple-making hub, loving the lost and proclaiming Jesus in all we do and say so our communities will flourish.