

THE NECESSITY OF COMMUNITY

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- **The CONNECT MORE series is helping people become better connected to the Lord, His Church, and His ministries so they can be winners in the "game of life."**
- ***When you think of community, what comes to your mind?***
- **For many, the word "community" comes in the form of family reunions, the town they live in, social clubs/gatherings, the school they attend, etc.**
- **As Christians, God has said that much of our community time and relationships should be with other Christians.**
- **"***Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near."* (Hebrews 10:25)
- **When sin entered the world, shortly after creation, it sought to separate us from God and from one another (Genesis 3:1-19).**
- **With social media, COVID, streaming services, and food/grocery delivery, we live in a society that has made it easier now than ever to live in isolation.**
- **To overcome life's difficulties and become stronger Christians, we must learn how to strengthen our relationship with the Lord and with other Christ followers.**
- *"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)
- ***Why should I be involved in the "Biblical community?"***

Engagement In Community With Other Christians Provides:

SUPPORT FOR THE <u>CHALLENGES</u> IN LIFE

- *"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed."* (Ecclesiastes 4:9)
- **It is extremely difficult to overcome life's problems on our own.**

- **Today, people find themselves more isolated and lonely than ever before.**
- In 2022, 49.63% of adults (25.99 million people) in the UK reported feeling lonely. -www.campaigntoendloneliness.org
- **We were designed, from the beginning of time, to be in community.**
- *"Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him."* (Genesis 2:18)
- **God created Eve to be a helpmate for Adam in life, and God created the Church (the people of God) to be a support network for one another.**
- *"Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."* (Romans 12:4-5)
- ***Where am I getting support from, and who am I giving support to?***

Engagement In Community With Other Christians Provides:
SAFETY FOR THE "<u>FALLS"</u> IN LIFE

- *"If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble."* (Ecclesiastes 4:10)
- **Life presents us with lots of opportunities for stumbles, falls, and setbacks.**
- **The worldly sentiment is to "pick yourself up by your bootstraps" or "God helps those who help themselves" - which is bad theology.**
- **We need to be reminded that no one gets far in life on their own.**
- *"Soon the house where He was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While He was preaching God's word to them, four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 'My child, your sins are forgiven.'...Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!' And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out…"* (Mark 2:2-11)
- **If we look back over our lives, we will find that it was others that lifted us up when we could not get up ourselves.**
- ***When have I fallen in life, and who has been there to pick me back up?***

Engagement In Community With Other Christians Provides:
SHARED COMFORT FOR THE <u>TRYING</u> <u>TIMES</u> OF LIFE

- *"Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone?"* (Ecclesiastes 4:11)
- **Having other believers in our lives makes going through difficult times easier.**
- *"Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice."* (Proverbs 27:9)
- "Shared joy is double joy; Shared sorrow is half a sorrow." - Swedish Proverb
- "Being soaked alone is cold. Being soaked with your best friend is an adventure." -Emily Wing Smith
- **God didn't design us to carry the load alone.**

- *"Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you."* (1 Peter 5:7)
- **Since we are made in the image of God, then we are to reflect the same character of concern to one another.**
- ***Who has been there for me when I needed comfort in life, and who have I been there for when they needed comfort in life?***

Engagement In Community With Other Christians Provides:

STRENGTH FOR THE <u>TURBULENT</u> TIMES OF LIFE

- *"A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."* (Ecclesiastes 4:12)
- **"Solo Christianity" actually puts us at a disadvantage when times are difficult and makes us much more vulnerable to the attacks of the Devil and devilish people.**
- *"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."* (1 Peter 5:8)
- **Good spiritual health is what makes us strong and good health is gained by working with other believers for the common goal.**
- *"He (God) makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."* (Ephesians 4:16)
- **The world says, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going;" but God's Word says, "when the going gets tough, we turn to the Lord and other Christians."**
- "*Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."* (Ephesians 6:18)
- ***What battles am I facing that I could use a group of people to help me with?***

- **Remember, there is no "I" in team; we are called to work together.**
- "The strength of the team is each individual member; the strength of each member is the team." -Phil Jackson
- **Our greatest strength is knowing that the Lord and other believers are by our side.**
- *"This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."* (John 15:12-13)
- **At Celebration Church, we believe community is best experienced and expressed by involvement in *our Life Group* ministry.**
- **In Life Group ministry people experience mutual support, shared comfort, safety for when they fall, and strength for life's battles.**
- ***What is God leading me to do based on what I have heard today?***