

THE CHURCH THAT JESUS BUILT

Daily Briefing • Day 5 of 5 • Stop Chasing Community

WEEKLY MEMORY VERSE

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.
John 13:35

Sunday we looked at a church whose unity and community came as a byproduct of shared experience, values, beliefs, and mission. Today we look at why aiming straight at community rarely produces the desired outcome. You can watch or listen to the sermon at 1mso.church or on the One Missoula app.

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I pray that You would help me connect with other Christians through shared mission with You, as we labor side by side to make disciples and build Your kingdom. I pray that You would bring friends into my life and form connections that change lives and change eternities. I pray these things humbly in the name of Jesus. Amen.

TODAY'S TEACHING

Put two adults in a room and tell them to go make friends. Watch what happens. It is awkward, it moves slowly, and half the time nothing comes of it. Now do the same thing with two six-year-olds. One of them walks up and asks the other to play, and the whole negotiation takes four seconds. Proximity is enough when you are six. Sometime later that stops working, and from then on friendship needs some sort of commonality: shared experience, shared values, shared beliefs, shared mission.

Which is why “let us build community” is a strange thing to aim at. Sunday we looked at a church with community people still write about two thousand years later, and they were not trying to produce it. Look at what Luke actually lists: “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). The word translated fellowship is the Greek *koinonia*. It does not mean enjoying each other’s company; it means having a share in something together. It sits in a list of things they were doing together, not in a list of things they were trying to feel.

Everyone already knows this from somewhere else. Think of any group you have seen that was genuinely close: a unit that trained and deployed together, a team that survived a brutal season, a crew that built something hard. Nobody in those groups set out to make friends. They shared beliefs about what mattered, they shared training, they shared risk, and they shared a goal. The closeness showed up as a result. If you had pulled them aside at the start and told them the real objective was bonding, they would have laughed at you.

Paul uses that exact picture for the church. He tells the Philippians to stand firm in one spirit, “with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27). Side by side is the part worth noticing. It does not mean facing each other and working on the relationship. It means facing the same direction, at the same thing, at the same time. The unity comes from where they are pointed.

So here is the practical turn. If your experience of church has felt thin, the fix is probably not another attempt at making friends. It is getting pointed at something with other people and staying there long enough for the work to do what it does. Show up to the same group every week. Volunteer for an assignment nobody wants. Serve on the team that meets at an inconvenient hour. Community is not the goal you chase; it is what God grows in people who are busy doing His work shoulder to shoulder.

READ & MEDITATE

Acts 2:42

And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Philippians 1:27-28

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

Read Acts 2:42 and notice fellowship is listed beside three other things they were doing, not held out as the goal. Then read Philippians 1:27-28 and notice what produces the standing firm and the one mind. It is not the relationship. It is the thing they are striving for together.

REFLECT

Reminder: honest introspection and Scripture-informed self-assessment are far more beneficial than self-delusion and wishful thinking.

Luke lists fellowship beside teaching, breaking bread, and prayer. It is one of the things they were doing, not the outcome they were chasing.

What does that tell you about how God grows closeness between His people?

Fill in the blank from Philippians 1:27:

*“...standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving _____ for the faith of the gospel.”
(Philippians 1:27)*

*These fill-in-the-blank questions use the ESV text. Your Bible may use different words for the same idea.

Side by side means facing the same direction, not facing each other.

Where have you tried to manufacture closeness with people instead of going and doing something alongside them?

Sunday named four things that hold a church together: shared (1) experience, (2) values, (3) beliefs, and (4) mission.

Which of the four are you actually sharing with somebody in this church, and which one is missing?

Five days of this have pressed on one question from five directions.

Looking back across the week, what is the one thing God has been putting in front of you that you have been avoiding? Do some honest introspective self-assessment before moving on.

WRITE YOUR "I WILL" STATEMENT

One specific action. A real deadline. Usually involving a specific person. Not a feeling, not an intention, not something you could claim you already do. Write it down before you close this week out.

PRAYER

Write your prayer or pray out loud. As we've read, God's ear is not dull. Talk to Him like He is listening and wants to hear from you.

MEMORY VERSE

Write or recite John 13:35 from memory:
