

Taking It Home:

- Perhaps you have been resisting plugging into some meaningful form of community, whether it is a Growth Group or an Adult Bible Fellowship or Men's Fraternity or a women's ministry group or student ministry, etc. What steps could you take today to move past whatever hinders you and get connected to something like one or more of these so that you can develop meaningful relationships and grow in your faith in Jesus Christ?
 - Reflecting on the Core Values that Pastor Matthew mentioned (Authenticity, Accountability, and Availability), how might these be fruitful in your own life?
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Dear Friend,

We at Bethel Church want you to enjoy meaningful relationships that endure for years, where you can be deeply enriched and you can richly give back to others. Please let us help you do that. With our Growth Groups, array of men's and women's ministry options, Adult Bible Fellowships, worship ministry options, student and children's ministry activities, and so much more, there are numerous ways to connect and grow.

If you are trying but not succeeding in finding the right spot for you, please let me know. My email is matthewstjohn@bethelc.com. As a man who greatly benefits from a group of friends with whom I can share personal matters and count on faithful prayer, I benefit daily from the relationships here at Bethel. We want to help you do the same.

Pastor Matthew

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

With One Accord
Acts 2:42-47

Dr. Matthew R. St. John
Bethel Church
September 9, 2012

With One Accord

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelc.com.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 9, 2012

Acts 2:42-47

Quick Review: David Gergen once said, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” He understood the power of relationship, that the most productive personal things in life come not in isolation but in community. That is a life-giving principle modeled throughout the Bible, and one that we at Bethel Church believe is essential for every follower of Christ.

My Story:

- Think about a time in your life during which the presence of friends made all the difference. Share about that experience. If you have had seasons during which you felt deeply alone and without helpful company, tell of that as well.
- Bethel Church is one of the largest churches in our entire region, and many of us who grew up in much smaller churches. Share about ways you have been overwhelmed by Bethel Church’s size and scope. Perhaps you have felt lost or alone here. Why is that, and in what ways, if any, have you been able to move past those issues?
- Considering the reality referenced in the preceding paragraph, think about the following statement: “The bigger we get, the smaller we get.” Explain that quote in light of the wide-array of Growth Groups, Adult Bible Fellowships, numerous ministries in which to participate, etc., found at Bethel Church. How can things at Bethel Church feel smaller?
- What kind of things might keep you from plugging into meaningful relationships with others who are pursuing Jesus Christ? In the face of real obstacles such as time constraints, work and kid responsibilities, etc., in what ways can you creatively connect with others so that you are not alone?
- Often people that feel dissatisfied with “church” are the very people disconnected from meaningful relationships, despite a wide-array of opportunities that are available for them. Do you know situations like that? Are you in a situation like that today, and if so why? Also, what role do you have in taking initiative and being responsible to engage healthy, biblical community?

Growing Deeper:

- Fellowship and Community are such important features for a healthy and vibrant life that in Acts 2 these are the first things to develop in the city of Jerusalem when multitudes of people place their trust in Christ Jesus. Immediately one concludes that Christianity lived in isolation and independence is neither healthy nor acceptable. Why is this?
- Community is so important to God that he actually is the personification of community: Father, Son, and Spirit, the Trinity; one God, three persons, the Ultimate Community. Indeed, so vital is the reality of relationship and community that we see God revealing this of himself in the very first chapter of the Bible when we read of God creating man “in our image” (Genesis 1:26). Take time to process the importance of relationship and community in light of the reality of the Trinity. Read Ephesians 2:18-21 for more insight and note that Father, Son and Spirit are referenced in Paul’s words, as is a strong hint toward the power of togetherness. Discuss the implications of this for your life.
- Pastor Matthew highlighted a small handful of observations from Acts 2:42-47 that are important for strengthening meaningful relationships. These included the aforementioned reference to the Trinity, as well as taking care of others. What were some of the other observations he mentioned?
- In his sermon, Pastor Matthew spoke of three core values for Bethel Church, and, perhaps for our lives. What were these three core values and why are they important?
- Carefully read Acts 2:42-47. What features of this story really stand out to you as uniquely compelling or meaningful and what things might you want to emulate in your own life and relationships?