**Goals for the future.**

This is a very serious topic. It’s NOT about Your future or Mine, but the Future of this Church. It’s about GROWTH & how to do it.

Share about Re-Hab and what was said to the residents…. What did David say? … without a vision, the people perish… but that’s another sermon.

We want to grow this fellowship to get to Church status so….

Let’s look at **growth**

• We have to concentrate on growth for two reasons.

**Point 1. If we don’t grow we will eventually die.**

• As time goes on congregations dwindle, through the natural course of life

• people leave whether through death …… or people move towns, through employment or family connections.

On the negative side sometimes people become disillusioned

\*Talking about things that you are concerned or hurt about is important. \*Conflicts in church, if it be toward leadership or on a more personal level amongst fellow believers, need to be resolved asap, to stop the adversary (Satan) from getting a foothold.

Always talk to elders or the Pastor if you have concerns.

Always make sure you talk to the right people.

And as the word says, take another believer with you need to.

Remember – Our fight is NOT against flesh & blood, but against principalities & powers in High places. Satan does NOT want the church to succeed. …

 • so we need to …. **breathe** ….. **new life** into our church family.

There was a clinical Director in one of my jobs, he was a Chinese Malay, he always said. “Lets talk abouwit”. Its very good advice.

**And Point 2. (and most importantly)**

**It’s what God wants us to do**

• We are called to go out and ….. **teach the message of Christ** to the world. [the Great Commission]

Mark 16:14-16 New King James Version (NKJV)

The Great Commission

**14**Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. **15**And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.**16**He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

• If we are going to be a **Spirit led church**, One where the **Holy Spirit** **guides** us in our decisions and blesses our actions, We have to do what the Spirit calls us to do.

So how do we do this? Where do we start? ……. We start by breathing **life** into it.

We start by bringing **unity** to it.

**Psalm 133 (read from the Amplified Bible)**

1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is when brothers live together in UNITY (some bibles say harmony)

2. It is like the precious oil [of consecration] poured on the head, coming down on the beard, even the beard of Aaron coming down upon the edge of his [priestly] robes [consecrating his whole body]

3. It is like the dew of [Mount] Hermon, coming down on the hills of Zion, for there the Lord has commanded the blessing: life forevermore

***\*\*Where there is UNITY, God commands a BLESSING***

As I said, Another word for Harmony is **UNITY**

And the definition of **unity** Is the state of being one; **(a oneness.)**

Here’s a thought - The redwood trees in California are amazing.

• They are the largest living things on earth and the tallest trees in the world.

• Some of them are 300 feet high and more than 2,500 years old.

• With this in mind You would think that trees this large would have to have an incredible root system,

• A root system that reached down hundreds of feet into the earth.

• But the truth of the matter is - Redwoods have a very shallow root system.

• The roots of these trees intertwine.

• They interlock their roots with each other;

• So when storms come and the winds blow the redwoods still stand.

• With an interlocking root system they support and sustain each other.

• They **need** one another to survive.

**And So do we!**

There are a lot of examples of **unity** in the bible.

In the OT there is the sense of **togetherness**

**Gen 1:26** Then God said “let us [father, son, holy spirit] make man in our own image, according to our likeness [not physical], but a spiritual personality and moral likeness; and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle. And over the entire earth, and over everything that creeps and crawls on the Earth.

**p.s. You can’t get any closer than that, can you?... and we are what?? ….. In Their likeness. …. As in UNIFIED**

We also see examples of fellowship in

**Judges 19:6** So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together.

There are also examples of praise

**Ps 34:3** O magnify the LORD with me; let us lift up His name together.

**Isaiah 11:** tells us that nature will be at peace with itself and with human kings.

**Isaiah 11:6** The wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat,

the calf and the young lion and the fatted steer together; and a little child will lead them.

**Isaiah 11:7** and the cow and the bear, will graze together. Their young will lie down together and the lion eat straw like the ox.

**Isaiah 11:8** The nursing child will [safely] play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den [and not be hurt]

**Isaiah 11:9** They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

In the NT **unity** speaks about the **faith that binds** God’s people together

**Ephesians 4:12** [and He did this] to fully equip and perfect the saints [Gods people] for works of service, to build up the body of Christ [the Church]

**Ephesians 4:13** until we all reach oneness in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, [growing spiritually] to become a mature believer, reaching to the fullness of Christ [manifesting His spiritual completeness and exercising our spiritual gifts in unity]
 *Repeat this again - slowly*

***Remember the last time I spoke it was about the gifts***

**Also in the early church, The Believers Formed a Community**

**Act 2:**

**42** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.

**43** A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

**44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had**.**

**45** They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.

**46** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity

**47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

**We also have to** understand the difference between **restoring and rebuilding**.

• I had a VW beetle which I restored to original… but bigger motor 1600cc to 1800cc (the reason? To keep up with the modern changes. It was a 1960 vehicle. I was in 2000, 40 years later, things had changed)

With the **restoration movement**, there are some problems.

• Churches are trying to restore what didn’t work in the first place.

Today we need to concentrate on **rebuilding t**he church

• We need to be able to use the example of the first church as a launch pad,

As it was the new church after Christs’ ascension

• This is how the church started, for all earthly examples

*• But the problem is that there has never been a perfect church,*

• So as we look at this church as an example

• We have to understand that we are called to do **better.**

We see they **Lived together**

• They **spent time together**

• It was **a family environment**.

• How do you **act in your family?**

• We share our **live’s with each other.**

• We share **testimonies with each other**

**Meals**

• Part of being a family is that you **eat meals together**

• Dinner at least

• We gather around the table, **not the TV** and we eat together

**In the early church**

• After they worshiped they **ate together**,

• It didn’t matter **where** they ate at,

• Because **every meal was a celebration**,

• They were the equivalent of modern day Pot lucks [mmm not a good word as – explain what I believe.

**1**. No pot in the Kingdom and

**2**. no luck in the Kingdom]

**Let’s use the words “bring and share” 😊**

**The Wonderful thing about harmony and unity**

• Is that it’s all **about balance**

• It’s about **everything working together**.

• When your life is out of balance you have problems.

• So What does it take to **keep in balance?**

We read in **[Acts2]**

**44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.

• They shared everything

• Not a person among them was needy (what a great concept)

• They worked together as a group of one

• They were united

• They took care of each other

• This is what a Benevolence ministry is all about

This is what we need to build on

*[Explain a little about my communal living at Jerusalem/JK Baxter/Whenuakura etc. Maybe share about Gloryvale a community church but the mistake they made was “exclusion” to exclude or separate can be problematic. We are IN the KINGDOM, but NOT of it.]*

**As we close today I want us to understand that**

We need to be part of a Church family **because**

1. A church family identifies us as a genuine believer.

2. A church family helps us to stop thinking about only ourselves

3. A church family helps us to develop spiritually.

4. A church family helps keep us from backsliding.

We see that Together we share in Christian Love

• We do this by **being open and honest** in our relationships.

• It’s through **relationships** that we experience **love and understanding**.

• To have a **relationship** means you **have interaction**.

• Relationships also involve **feedback.**

By human nature most people want to **belong** to a group, eg Gangs.

• But at the same time, there can be some **reluctance** to join a group.

• Ever since Adam and Eve sinned and hid themselves from God

• People inherited a tendency to **hide from God**

• And to **hide** from one each other.

• But as long as the group has a dozen or more people in it they feel safe.

**Unity is a key factor in the church of Jesus Christ.**

• Unity within the Family of God means that **we accept one another’s weaknesses and strengths.**

• We accept one another **just as Jesus accepts us**. Unconditionally!

• We support one another **even when we may not approve** of the way someone dresses or color of their hair.

• We accept one another with **different views**,

• Different **convictions, politics and cultural styles**.

God created each one of us to belong to **His family**.

• He created us for **fellowship**.

• And part of Fellowship is being part of **the Family of God**

• But this involves making **a choice**.

• You have to **choose** to belong.

• If you have accepted Christ as your savior then you are **my brother or sister, [In Christ]**

 You have become part of **God’s family**.

• It’s **faith** and **trust in God** that unites us and makes us a family.

• If you haven’t placed your **complete trust in Christ**,

• Then You will never truly fully experience **the joy** of belonging to **God’s family.**

**Remember that where there is UNITY God COMMANDS a BLESSING**