

THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

2 Timothy 1:15-18

“Examples of Friendship: Good and Bad”

9_10_2023

Speaker: Pastor Drew Hunsley

Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

25:25

It's good to be here with you guys this morning. So I want to invite you guys to go ahead and make your way to 2 Timothy. Surprise, surprise. We're going to be in 2 Timothy. We're picking up where we left off last week. We're going to look at verses 15 through 18 through the end of the chapter this week. If you don't have a Bible with you, there should be one hiding underneath of your seat.

25:51

We're going to be on page 1,215 in that Bible. So if you guys want to follow along, we also have the passage on the screens in a few minutes as well. But as we are making our way there, I know you guys are still turning, just to remind you of where we're at last week as Pastor Mike so brilliantly pointed out, you've all forgotten what we talked about last week by this point.

26:13

So we're kind of continuing the idea of what Paul was talking about last week. Last week he was encouraging Timothy to stand with him in the face of difficulty, in the face of persecution or suffering or whatever may come.

26:27

He encourages Timothy, he tells him, following Jesus is worth it, regardless of what difficulty comes your way. Because whatever it is that comes, life can't throw more at you than Jesus can give to you or that Jesus can bless you with.

26:42

And so as we know that that doesn't always mean comfortable, that doesn't always mean healthy, that doesn't always mean wealthy or prosperous or anything else. But Jesus is worth it because Jesus came to make a way for sinners like us to know a holy God, to know our Creator.

26:59

And that's worth far more than any comfort or any health or anything else can be. He is inviting Timothy to be a part of something bigger than himself. And so this week what we see is Paul kind of finishing that idea with a couple of illustrations, a couple of people that Timothy would have known.

27:17

And he gives us the pain of bad friendships, talking about how difficult it can be to have bad friends. And he also talks about the blessing and the joy of godly friends in our passage this week. So this week, the story as Paul is gonna describe it in these brief verses of verse 15 through 18.

27:36

It's a story of desertion as friends left and abandoned Paul and it's a story of encouragement as there was one friend specifically who loved Paul and encouraged him in the midst of this difficult season when everyone else seemingly was abandoning him.

27:53

Paul relates this to further encourage and challenge Timothy to stand tall, to stand in the face of suffering or persecution or whatever may come to stand strong for the sake of the gospel. Essentially he says, you remember Phygellus and Hermogenes, right?

28:09

You remember those guys, they along with several of their friends, abandoned me. Don't be like those cowardly deserters, but instead you also remember Onesiphorus. Be like Onesiphorus was. Be the friend that stands by me, that encourages me, that walks with me and partners with me through the gospel no matter what.

28:29

Whatever it is that comes, be like him, not like the ones that ran and hid when things got hard. So with that we wanna read our passage. I'm gonna invite you to follow along either in your copy or on the screens.

28:42

We're gonna read 2 Timothy chapter one verses 15 through 18 together and then we'll dig into them a little bit. Starting in verse 15, Paul tells Timothy, he says, you're aware of all who were in Asia they turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

28:58

May the Lord grant mercy though to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. But when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me earnestly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day.

29:16

And you well know all the service that he rendered at Ephesus. These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me now? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the fact that God in good times and in bad. God as we see here from Paul, God we know that life brings all kinds of difficulty our direction, but God we know that the people that are in our lives, the people that we are in other people's lives.

29:42

God that it can make such a huge difference on our joy or our pain. God on our ability to endure or our willingness to give up. God, friendship means such a significant impact in our lives. And so God we pray as we consider these examples, both of good friendship and of bad this week.

30:02

We pray that you would help us to consider the friends that we keep. God that you would help us to consider the friends that we are. And God that you would use your word to speak to your servants this morning. We love you, we thank you for all that you do for us, and we thank you for Jesus. That's in his name we pray, amen.

30:19

All right, well the good news for you, I love this one, this message for our first service, our family service especially, because whether you are 80 years old, or whether you are eight years old, a message talking about the friends that we keep is an important one for all of us to consider, right?

30:36

Anybody ever remembers, Mama would always say, right back in the day, Mama always said, the friends you keep makes a huge impact on the person that you become. And so when we have good friends, that means that we are being influenced towards good, and when we have bad friends, that means that we are being influenced towards the bad.

30:54

But what we see here first is the pain that Paul experienced from some bad friendships that he had made. We see in verse 15, he mentions that all who were in Asia turned away from him, specifically, he mentions a couple of people, Phygellus and Hermogenes.

31:13

And Paul's sharing with Timothy, I guess venting, getting off his chest a little bit, that he had been abandoned by these fair-weather friends. Now I'm not gonna ask you to raise hands or anything, but I'm sure there's at least a few people in the room that can think of some fair-weather friends that were there when the going was good, but then when things got difficult, they took off.

31:35

Where did my friends go when the money ran out? When things got hard, when that diagnosis came, whatever it was, you know who your true friends are when difficult times come, right? Well, Paul has experienced that firsthand, and he's reminding Timothy of what had happened with these fair-weather friends.

31:54

He seems to be talking about the fact that there was this whole contingent. He even says, probably through hyperbole, I don't think everyone who was in Asia had abandoned Paul because we know that Timothy was in Ephesus.

32:08

He didn't abandon Paul. There were others like Onesophorus who didn't abandon Paul, but he's saying, it feels like everyone has abandoned me, has taken off, and has run, that when things got difficult, when persecution and suffering came Paul's way, it felt like everyone took off and left.

32:27

What Paul's encouraging Timothy with here is he's telling him, don't forsake the gospel, and don't forsake me when things get hard. Staying firm in the face of persecution, Jesus is worth it. It's the same message that we looked at last week, a few verses earlier.

32:43

Jesus is worth it no matter what life may throw our direction, but I think it's hard for me to wrap my mind around what Paul must have been experiencing, because what we know of Paul, we don't have the movie on Paul, right?

32:56

But we've seen enough of his writings, we see enough of his interactions with people as he's written so many letters that are a part of our New Testament. We know the type of person that Paul is. We know that Paul was a friend who would go and would give of himself even when it was difficult.

33:14

Paul was the friend that people would turn to when things got hard. Paul was an incredible friend to anyone who he came in contact with. We know that Paul cared deeply for those that he had built relationships with, which we see in the letters that he sends back and forth.

33:30

Apparently, it was a large population of people that he had built these relationships with, because you cannot pick up a letter that Paul wrote without him talking about, hey, make sure that you say hi to this person and to that person.

33:44

Hey, I remember when I was there, I met this person. How are they doing? Because I love them and I wanna come see them soon. Paul had devoted his life to caring for and leading and supporting all of these churches that had been established in these different cities in the area, calling them his brothers and his sisters in Christ.

34:07

He really did have that family attitude that he was always there for people. He was constantly traveling to visit or to pray for or to give advice to. He was sending letters

wanting to encourage and help when things got difficult and when they needed advice or needed support.

34:23

He was even willing to give of his own financial means to help in many of these circumstances. As he refused support from some and he took care of his own needs and he would support and give out of his means for the sake of his friends.

34:39

Paul exemplified in his constant concern that his relationships that he had with his friends were important to him. They were valuable to him. He talks about how he prayed for people. He talks about how he thanked God when he remembered them.

34:57

He thanks God for their service or their encouragement. He talks about, hey, make sure you send greetings to this person or to that person. It seems especially clear to me when we read Paul's letter to the Romans, the book of Romans that we've got in the New Testament.

35:14

By that point, when Paul wrote Romans, he had never been to Rome. He talks about how he wished he could make it to Rome soon. I want to come to Rome, but I haven't been there. Meanwhile, he goes on to list, I think it was 33 names in the last chapter of Romans, Romans chapter 16.

35:32

He mentions 24 specifically by name that were in Rome, even though he had never been to Rome. How's he done that? It's because he keeps up with the friends that are moving around. It's because he knows of this person who knows that person who knows this person over here.

35:48

He was the connected guy before social media ever existed. He was keeping track of his friends, right? He knew what was going on because he was praying for them regularly, because he cared about them, because he wanted to be that person that was there for them when perhaps no one else would be.

36:08

But here when we see in 2 Timothy, now Paul has made it to Rome, right? He's in Rome in a prison, underneath of Rome. And in 2 Timothy chapter one, Paul reveals that he had been deserted by a substantial group of people as he reminds Timothy in verse 15.

36:26

He says, you're aware of all who were in Asia, how they turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. These two men, there's a few different times in scripture where people are mentioned as examples of the negative.

36:47

It's gotta be embarrassing for them to be the ones that are mentioned that Paul called out. Really all of us abandoned you, and Phygellus and Hermogenes are sitting here going, why are we the ones that made it into the letter?

36:58

But Paul uses them as negative examples of what not to do. Don't be like this guy, don't be like that guy. When the going got tough, they took off, that they got going, right? But not in a good way. Apparently Phygellus and Hermogenes were unaware of what Proverbs 17:17 has to say.

37:21

Proverbs 17:17 says that a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Means that when things get hard, you don't take off running. You stand by your brother, you stand by your friend.

37:35

Adversity separates the fluff of what so many people call friendship, that surfacey, acquaintance-level friendship. Adversity separates that from the substance of real, meaningful, deep friendship. That friendship that Paul would refer to as he talked about people as his brother, as his sister, as family.

38:01

Family doesn't take off and run, not supposed to anyways, right? Family doesn't take off and run when things get hard. But the truth had become apparent through Paul's difficulties, that he had a lot of people who were just there when it was convenient, and then when things got hard, they took off.

38:20

Paul was in pain. I think we can see it. I think we know in the midst of this, as we read 2 Timothy, we know that Paul is also joyous and trusts in God about his circumstances, but Paul's experienced some pain.

38:38

And in order to experience pain in the way that Paul had, you have to be devoted to a person. And you have to be in a real relationship with a person for them to really hurt you, right? Has anybody ever had a stranger yell at them or say something mean or rude to them? Maybe you're in a store and someone says something that just seems incredibly rude. That's painful, a little bit, right? Somebody yells at you while you're on the freeway, like, well, that guy's a jerk.

39:07

But it doesn't really hurt, right? Doesn't really cut to the core of who you are. Now, if your spouse or your family member said the same thing about you, if your parent said the same thing about you, it hurts differently, right?

39:22

It cuts deeper when someone that you love, that you value that person says something or abandons you or hurts you in some way, it hurts differently than the people who are just casual acquaintances. People you don't know can't really hurt you in the same way.

39:39

But meaningful hurt, meaningful pain comes when you have known someone, when you have loved someone, when you have invested in someone. C.S. Lewis with some brilliant words here, but makes me a little skeptical about C.S. Lewis. He says, to love it all is to be vulnerable. If you don't want to be hurt, give yourself to no one, not even a cat. Apparently, C.S. Lewis was a cat person. That takes him from here to somewhere in here.

40:07

And you know, the dog would have worked well, right? Don't worry, we still love you if you're a cat person. There's room at the cross for repentance. You can change and our prayer team will be down here after service if you're a cat person. Kidding.

40:22

But I think there's truth in that, isn't there? If you don't wanna be hurt by anyone, don't give yourself to anyone. Obviously that's a scarred and a flawed attitude that some take in life. I'm just not gonna be hurt by anyone.

40:39

I'm gonna protect myself and so I'm gonna keep everyone out. And that's not healthy. You can't live life that way. But Paul had given these people everything that he had because that's who Paul was. Paul was the person that would sacrifice of his own means, would give of himself time and time again.

41:00

He had given of himself to Phygellus and Hermogenes and those that were with them. But as Paul gave of himself, they abandoned him. And the pain from that, he was deeply hurt by their betrayal. Thinking about this idea of bad friends, I compiled a little list here, just a few examples, because friendship can have some positive effects that we're gonna talk about in just a minute, but the Bible also warns us about several dangerous aspects of having bad friends.

41:33

If you choose the wrong friends, you can find yourself in some dangerous places. And so let's look at a few things that the Bible has to say about either stories, illustrating bad friends, or maybe some specific principles that the Bible says, how it's dangerous having bad friends.

41:50

We stuck a little list in here. First, in 2 Samuel 13, we see that bad friends can lead us to sin with younger people in the room. I'm not gonna tell you the story, but go read 2 Samuel 13. There was a man named Amnon, who received some really, really terrible, terrible advice from a friend who led him to do some pretty terrible things.

42:13

Deuteronomy 13 tells us that bad friends can lead us astray. Spiritually, they can lead us astray. We also know that bad friends can give us some really terrible advice if you read the Book of Job at all.

42:28

You see these friends pop into the story a few different times. They show up in chapter two and chapter six. Later on in the book in chapter 42, we see these friends show up and they have advice for Job.

42:39

And it is the worst advice that you could offer Job as someone's going through what Job was going through. They made his suffering worse. They displeased the Lord with what they told Job to do. You can get some really terrible advice if you've got bad friends.

42:58

Bad friends also will desert us when our friendship no longer benefits them. Couple of different things. Psalm 55 talks about that. Proverbs 19 talks about that. And when the money runs out, they take off.

43:11

When things are no longer helpful for them or beneficial for them in some way, they take off. I'm sure none of us have ever experienced that as someone bailed when things got difficult. Finally, Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, he says that bad company corrupts good character.

43:29

It's dangerous for us to have bad friends. It's dangerous for us not to care deeply about the people that we spend time with, that we allow to influence us because bad company can corrupt even the best of character.

43:42

Young people, that's why your mom and your dad care deeply about the friends that you spend time with. Because the Bible tells us that we should be outward facing, like Pastor Mike was talking about earlier, that the Christian life is not lived as an inward we hide and we stay by ourselves.

44:00

The Bible tells us that we should go, that we should be salt and light in a world that needs us. They need to hear the message that we have to give. But there's also a dangerous space in that. Because if we give ourselves wholly to the world and we are

surrounded by their influences and we're surrounded by the things that are of the world and not of what God has to say.

44:23

If our closest core friends are people who don't share our belief that God's word is true and that it should be what ultimately leads our life, well then we start listening to what they have to say. We start listening to their influences.

44:37

We start caring more about what our friends say, even bad friends, than what God's word has to say. And when we allow our primary influences to be people that don't believe in Jesus and don't care what God has to say, it can tear you up.

44:55

I've seen so many people that started with a good attitude of, I want to go help this person. I want to be a friend and tell this person about Jesus. I want to go and I want to help in the spaces where people need help.

45:11

But then time starts to erode at that attitude. Time starts to erode at that good, well - intentioned starting point. And all of a sudden it's, well, that's not that bad. Then all of a sudden it's, well, I need to go with them and participate in whatever this sinful thing is in order to really be a good friend.

45:32

Yeah, I'll invite them to church after we go do whatever that terrible thing is, right? All of a sudden we start talking ourselves into it and they influence us more than we influence them. It's dangerous for us to allow our core, our closest friends to be people who don't share our beliefs.

45:54

Bad company can corrupt good characters, as 1 Corinthians 15 tells us. Paul has experienced this pain of bad friendships, but he also talks positively about a man named Onesiphorus. In verse 16 through 18 we see the joy of great friendship as Paul was encouraged by this good friend Onesiphorus.

46:19

Because while Paul had presented Phygellus and Hermogenes as negative examples, hey, don't be a friend like Phygellus was. Don't be a friend like Hermogenes was, who was there when things were helpful or beneficial for them, but when things got hard they took off and they bailed on Paul.

46:37

But Paul also talks about the joy of good friendship, verses 16 through 18. Verse 16 he says, May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains.

46:54

But when he arrived in Rome he searched for me, searched for me earnestly and found me. May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that day. You well know all the service that he rendered at Ephesus.

47:09

Finding your friend was a little harder before you had their location shared to you. Onesiphorus shows up in this big city and he's trying to track down somebody who's not very popular. He's trying to track down Paul who by the way at this point is probably an enemy of the state.

47:28

So to walk out, have you seen Paul? First off he's declaring that he's a friend of Paul's which may cost him. Second off he's asking people that probably don't want to admit

where Paul is because it may cost them if they're honest and point Onesiphorus in the right direction.

47:48

But in contrast to all those who were in Asia who Paul said abandoned him, Onesiphorus shares Paul's attitude that Paul mentions in the beginning of Romans. Romans chapter one verse 16 Paul said, for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

48:12

Paul is encouraging Timothy here in this letter, don't be ashamed of the gospel and don't be ashamed of me. And Onesiphorus is a perfect example of what that looks like to live that out well because he wasn't ashamed of the gospel, he wasn't ashamed of being associated with Paul who was being persecuted, who was enduring suffering because he was preaching the message of Jesus.

48:38

When most took off, when most ran, when most recoiled because of Paul's suffering and Paul's reputation and they wanted nothing to do with him, when everyone else was running away, Onesiphorus was running in.

48:51

He was that first responder that as everyone else runs from the danger, he was running in to help Paul. Apparently Onesiphorus counted it an honor to serve and to encourage and to be there for Paul time and time and time again.

49:10

Onesiphorus illustrated what Proverbs 17 says about a friend, a friend loves at all times, a brother is born for adversity. Because of that, Paul here in 2 Timothy says that he's praying for the household of Onesiphorus, he's praying for God to show mercy to Onesiphorus on that day.

49:38

Onesiphorus is the epitome of friendship as Paul has been encouraged by him, as Paul was pleading with Timothy to stand at his side, not to forsake him, not to forsake the gospel. Onesiphorus knew the true value of friendship and refused to forsake Paul even when it was going to cost him.

50:00

Initially, we can deduce a few things from Onesiphorus' interactions and what we know of Paul at this time. First, being friends with and being faithful to Paul would cost Onesiphorus some time, some energy.

50:16

He had to go search for him. It says that he sought him out when he got to Rome he started looking. He had to sacrifice time in spending, going around and asking questions and looking for his friend that he wanted to come and to encourage.

50:30

Next, Onesiphorus had to sacrifice some comfort. In order to be a good friend to Paul, it was going to cost him some things. As he was going around asking, have you seen Paul? Do you know where Paul is?

50:42

He was costing himself every time he asked that question. He was costing himself relationships. He was costing himself power. He was costing himself reputation. He was associating himself with that enemy of the state that no one wanted to be associated with.

50:59

Paul was viewed negatively at that point, and so by seeking Paul out, he was costing himself some comfort and some reputation as well. Finally, we can assume, perhaps, but I believe it's a fair assumption.

51:19

Onesiphorus' friendship with Paul was ultimately going to cost him his health, and it seems likely it cost him his life. It would explain why Paul was praying for the household of Onesiphorus. That's why we don't see that he's praying for Onesiphorus.

51:38

I believe that this was because Onesiphorus had been there and stood by Paul in the midst of all of this persecution, in the midst of all of this suffering, and it would make sense if Onesiphorus had given his life to stand at Paul's side.

51:53

It would make sense why Paul was praying for Onesiphorus to find mercy on that day. It's a term that is used commonly throughout Scripture to refer to the day of the Lord, to refer to judgment day, that God is ultimately going to come back one day and judge the world.

52:09

That day, that's shorthand for that day. Judgment day. So Paul praying for mercy for Onesiphorus, for mercy for his family on that day, on judgment day, makes it seem like Onesiphorus has probably given his life already.

52:29

In order to stand by Paul's side, he didn't care what it cost him. To stand for the Gospel, he didn't care what it cost him. He modeled what we talked about last week, that in the face of difficulty, in the face of pain, in the face of suffering, Onesiphorus decided that Jesus and the Gospel and standing at Paul's side was worth it.

52:54

To the point where Paul is now praying for encouragement for his family. God be there for those that were left behind. We talked earlier about how the Bible warns about the dangers of bad friendships.

53:12

But it also speaks words of praise and encouragement as it talks about good friends. It's all kinds of different things that we were able to stick in here. I stuck some things in, some Bible verses in.

53:22

You may want to snap pictures of these and go back and look at a later time. But the Bible has a lot to say about good friends as well. Because good friends, true friends, can serve as a guide to us.

53:34

They can help us to make wise choices. That's why choosing our friends wisely is so important. Proverbs 12:26, let me read for you. It says, One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

53:48

A good friend loves at all times and is not necessarily just situationally supportive, like some of these friends that Paul is talking about. We read it a couple of different times at this point. Proverbs 17:17 says a friend loves at all times and a brother is born for adversity.

54:06

Good friends, true friends bring joy through their good advice. In contrast to the bad advice that Job received from his friends. Proverbs 27:9 says that oil and perfume make a heart glad and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel.

54:24

True friends will also correct us when necessary. When you get out of line, sometimes it's a loving nudge and sometimes it's a whack on the side of the head. Proverbs 27, verse 5 and 6 says, Better is open rebuke than hidden love.

54:41

Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but profuse are the kisses of an enemy. True friends are also loyal. Proverbs 18:24 says that a man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

54:58

That true friend is going to be loyal and stand with you no matter what the rest of life comes. True friends are also there for you when things get tough. When you need their help, they're there for you.

55:11

Ecclesiastes chapter 4 says that two are better than one because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up.

55:26

To lie down together they can keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? The man might prevail against one who is alone. Two will withstand him. Threefold cord is not quickly broken. When we're alone, when we try to do things ourselves, we get ourselves in trouble sometimes.

55:43

But true friends are there for you when things get hard. They're there for you when you need them. True friends, wise friends can also help us to become wise as well. Proverbs

13 verse 20 says, whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but a companion of fools, a friend of fools, will suffer harm.

56:03

True friends, encourage us to do the right thing. Encourage us. Hebrews 10 verse 24 and 25 says, let us consider how to stir one another up towards love. Love and good works. Not neglecting to meet together as some are in the habit of doing, but all the more as you see the day approaching.

56:24

Encouraging one another. Encourage us to do the right thing. They stir us up towards love and good deeds, as Hebrews 10 says. A good friend will also treat you, will treat others with the same compassion, with the same forgiveness, with the same generosity, with the same loyalty that he or she would expect if someone was being a friend to them.

56:51

Luke 6:31 tells us, as you would wish for others to do to you, do so to them. They want loyalty, they'll be loyal. They want generosity, they'll be generous. If they want compassion, they'll be compassionate.

57:08

They want to be forgiven, they will forgive. Finally, good company can encourage us to do the right thing, but bad company will do the opposite as well. Verse Corinthians 15, Paul says, it do not be deceived, bad company ruins good morals.

57:28

Good friends help, bad friends cause pain. I think Paul named some names here. I love the fact that Paul just calls it the way that he sees it in this letter. It tells us Onesiphorus is this beautiful example that he holds up for us to consider what Onesiphorus' friendship was like to Paul.

57:54

We consider the value of true, genuine Christian friendship, Christian fellowship. Paul was encouraged by Onesiphorus, and the reality is that in the Christian life, we need that. Life is difficult, isn't it?

58:11

I saw those nods last week. You guys were probably a few of you with whiplash last week, right? We were talking about how difficult life is, how hard life can be. Absolutely it is. Life just has a way of piling on sometimes, doesn't it?

58:28

It seems like things just get harder and harder and harder every single day. If you had a good day yesterday, I'm sorry for what today holds because we don't get two in a row, right? We don't get two.

58:42

Life just has a way of hammering and hammering and hammering. But you know what? Standing on the gospel, standing with Jesus, facing whatever that suffering is. Sorry, this is a call back to last week.

58:55

Any of it is worth it. It's worth it to stand with Jesus because he ultimately, when we get on the other side of that suffering, Jesus has far more waiting for us in the days to come, in the years to come, in the eternity to come.

59:14

Our little theology book taught us, right? God always has been and always will be. We can have hope for the future because God is on the other side of whatever the suffering is. But in the midst of it, there's some wisdom here as well this week.

59:33

Because in the midst of whatever it is that life holds, it's easier to walk through it when you've got good friends by your side. It's harder to walk through it when you've got people that you thought were friends and they bail at first sign of resistance.

59:51

That's why the Bible talks so clearly, so repeatedly, over and over and over and over. And if I wanted to be accurate, I think I have to say like 56 more "and overs" there. Talks over and over again about how we're supposed to live in community with one another.

01:00:05

There are all of these one another's that we see in the New Testament about how we're given to one another, about how we are commanded to love one another and honor one another and show hospitality to one another and live in fellowship with one another, to live in harmony, to live at peace with, to be kind to one another, to forgive one another.

01:00:26

All of those things require being in community with people, require having good friendships. Means that we don't get to just go do this on our own. I stuck in a little QR code in the slides. This is just another church put together a list of all of the "one another's" that we see in Scripture and just, here it is.

01:00:52

If I just wanted to read through it, it would probably take us the whole time that we had this morning. But it is a worthwhile time for you to just go read those Bible verses. Just go read what it looks like to live the way that God has told us to live as Christians.

01:01:05

We're supposed to be there for one another. By the way, once you're all done, clicking. I want to make sure that you hear this. Because by the way, knowing others and being known by others is not optional.

01:01:28

It's not an option for us to live in fellowship with one another in the church. Knowing and being known by our church family isn't really spoken of in optional terms in the Bible. We are given to one another.

01:01:40

We are given responsibility for one another. We're commanded to take responsibility for one another. You may remember that the Bible does say, someone says, I'm not my brother's keeper. Am I my brother's keeper?

01:01:54

Why do I have to take care of him? Why do I have to be responsible for him? But that's not exactly a wise saying of the Bible that we should strive to attain. Right? If you're familiar with the story of when those words were uttered, back in the book of Genesis, it's a murderous brother who had just killed the man that he's now going, I don't know where he is.

01:02:20

He was shirking responsibility as God confronted him about it. He said, am I my brother's keeper? The answer to that question is yes, you are. We are members of one body. First Corinthians chapter 12 talks about how the church, about how Christians are committed to one another, are devoted to one.

01:02:42

We live as one body. It talks about us as a physical body. About how we need one another. If the body needs a hand to pick something up and they're not there, we got a problem, right? If the eyes just felt like taking a day off, you're going to have some bruises on your forehead.

01:03:04

When a body has a body part that's injured, the whole body feels it. When a body part is infected, the whole body is infected. The whole body runs a fever. When a body is dismembered and a part's cut off, the whole body feels that pain.

01:03:23

The rest of the body experiences the loss of that digit, of that limb, whatever it was. To be a Christian in proper standing before God is to be a Christian in community with other believers. There is no such thing as lone ranger Christians.

01:03:42

The Bible just doesn't talk about it. You cannot do it. Even the lone ranger wasn't alone. He had Tanto, right? We need people. To live the Christian life is to be devoted to one another. Is to stand side by side, arm in arm with our brothers and our sisters and say, no, no, when you're not strong, I get to be strong.

01:04:06

When I'm not strong, I need you to be strong. We need each other. God knew how hard it was. All those nods last week, yeah, life is hard. Yeah, things get tough sometimes. All those nods that you experience.

01:04:25

The answer to that is in this week's passage. Paul was able to point back and say, no, it is hard. But Onesiphorus stood by my side. So I think the question for us is, what are you choosing? Are you choosing to invest in relationships with true friends, with good friends, with people who will stand by your side like Onesiphorus did for Paul?

01:04:53

Or are you relying on people like Phygellus and Hermogenes with those casual relationships where we just kind of float in and float out of other people's lives who are going to bail on you when things get tough?

01:05:06

It's important for us to choose our friends wisely. It's important for us to care about who we spend time with, about who we make those priorities in our lives because there are some who will stand with us and will stick closer than a brother, and there are some who are gone as soon as it behooves them.

01:05:28

Choose your friends wisely. I think it's also important for us to consider of ourselves which type of friend are you? Which type of friend are you? Are you the friend who has casual acquaintances but never takes the time to follow through?

01:05:47

Says that you'll pray for somebody but then never thinks about it again, never does anything to check in, never cares when it actually comes down to following through? Are you the friend that, you know, a friend calls you in the middle of the night?

01:06:05

Probably means they know that you're sleeping and they need something. The person that rolls over and looks at it and goes, not tonight. Or are you there for your friends when the going gets tough? Are you the friend like Phygellus and Hermogenes?

01:06:24

Are you a friend like Onesiphorus? Are you the friend who's willingly going to volunteer to sacrifice your own time, to sacrifice your energy, to sacrifice your comfort, to sacrifice your resources, whatever it is that a friend needs, are you willing to be there when your friend has need?

01:06:41

Are you willing to stand arm in arm with somebody, the way that Christians are commanded to? All those one and others, we have to be there for one another. We're the only thing that holds each other up because life just beats down and beats down and

God knew how difficult it was going to be and God knew, no, no, no, y'all going to need each other.

01:07:08

That's why Christian fellowship, Christian community is God's plan. That's why it's the only way that this works. So which type of friend are you? Which type of friends are you allowing to be your friends?

01:07:29

Our prayer team is going to be down here after the service is over. They would love to pray with you about whatever it is that you've got going on. They'll be that friend that sticks closer than a brother that will pray for you when you need it.

01:07:41

Our prayer wall is back in the back as well. If you don't want to come down or don't have time to come down but want us to be praying for you, we would love to do that as well. Go drop your prayer request in the box or roll it up and stick it in the wall back there.

01:07:53

Our prayer team and our leaders will get that and will pray for you then as well. Friendships matter. Who we choose and the type of friend we are. It matters. Would you pray with me?

01:08:16

God, we thank you for loving us. For loving us enough to know that we would need help. God, we're thankful for the way that you have reached in and God, you were the ultimate help. God, when we were utterly helpless of finding our way to you, when we were dead in our trespasses and our sins, God, you made a way.

01:08:40

You, being rich in mercy with the great love with which you loved us, reached down and came into our humanity, came into our mess and saved us. But God, on top of that, we know that life just has a way of beating us up sometimes.

01:08:58

And we need one another. That's why you talk so clearly and so repeatedly over and over and over again about what it looks like to live in Christian community, to live in fellowship with one another, to live and be there for each other.

01:09:18

God, we pray that you would help us to consider that the friends that we allow into our lives to have influence in us. And God, we pray that you would help us to be friends like Onesiphorus who would be a blessing to those that are around us.

01:09:34

That we would be the one who stands with people when no one else will stand with them. Who will walk with people when no one else will walk with them. God help us to have wisdom to know what friendship, what it looks like in our lives.

01:09:54

Father we thank you for loving us. We thank you for Jesus. It's in His name we pray. Amen.