

# The Challenges of Life Together

## Sunday April 22, 2012

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**Acts 2:44** And all that believed were **together**, and had all things common;

### **Hebrews 10:24-25**

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves **together**, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

### **1Thessalonians 4:16-17**

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up **together** with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be (together) with the Lord.

### **1Thessalonians 5:9-11**

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live **together** with him.

11 Wherefore comfort yourselves **together**, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

These verses are but a few of many that speak to us of the Lord's desire that, along with Him, God's people are to spend both now and eternity **together**.

The fellowship the Lord has planned for His children is designed to be close and continuous.

I am sure that when we are in our new bodies and no longer shackled with this sinful flesh that living in close fellowship together will be as easy as pie; but for now such is not always the case.

Let's face it; some of you are just not real easy to love or to live with. Let me rephrase that; given a little time to get to know each other; none of us is particularly easy to get along with. Some just do not play well with others!

Now we do love the honeymoon. When you first get saved or when you first become a member of the Church, everybody is perfect and nobody is ever offensive and life is wonderful.

Then as the months and the years begin to roll by, all those people who used to be so sweet start getting mean. They may talk about you or they get grumpy; they disappoint you, they let you down; they just change right before your eyes!

It is like the reverse of the 25-year-old talking about his dad. “When I was a teenager my dad was as dumb as a stump; it’s amazing how much he has learned these last ten years!”

For us to accomplish the work of the Lord He has given us; we must face the challenges of getting along together long-term. Like all forms of personal relationships, it takes effort to make them the best they can be; even for them just to survive.

You won’t accomplish anything real or substantial for the Lord in the short term. Our job is to build up this Church and that doesn’t happen with people who give up and quit because they can’t stand together. If you look around this Church, you will find the ones getting the job done for the Lord are the ones who have been paying the price of commitment and service and sacrifice for years.

In our text of **1Thessalonians 5:9-23**, we are given some guidelines; some rules, if you will, that will allow us to hang in there together for the long term.

- 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
- 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

- 12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;
- 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.
- 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*.
- 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.
- 16 Rejoice evermore.
- 17 Pray without ceasing.
- 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
- 19 Quench not the Spirit.
- 20 Despise not prophesyings.
- 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
- 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.
- 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **I. First, the Lord wants us to take on the responsibility of blessing others:**

*A. You need to see your presence in God's house as an assignment from the Lord to bless every one you can in this place!*

1. **1Thessalonians 5:11** Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify **one another**, even as also ye do.

2. It is not just the job of others to bless and encourage you; it is your job to bless and encourage them.

3. Jesus said in **Matthew 5:44** **But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;**

4. If we are to treat our enemies so; how much more should we be prone to bless those we love and who also love us?

5. **Romans 12:10** *Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;*

*B. Every member of the Body is a co-laborer with Christ.*

1. **2Corinthians 6:1** We then, as workers together *with him*, beseech *you* also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2. **1Corinthians 3:9** For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

3. Everything we do for each other we do for Christ:

### Matthew 25:34-40

- 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
- 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:
- 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.
- 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?
- 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?
- 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?
- 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

## II. The Lord also tells us to follow our God-given human examples.

*A. You need to get to know those who faithfully lead in blessing others.*

### 1. 1Thessalonians 5:12-13

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;  
 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

2. We are to emulate those who labor, who lead and who love!

3. God says get to know those people; they are your examples who are called of God to be so.

*B. Many of you already have that particular calling of God upon your life.*

1. That calling may indeed be the call to preach as some of you men clearly do have.

**2Timothy 4:2** Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

2. But remember, back in I Timothy that began with the call to be an example.

**1Timothy 4:12** Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

*C. God commands that we follow the faith of those who teach us the Word of God.*

1. **Hebrews 13:7** Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you

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the word of God: whose faith follow,  
considering the end of *their* conversation.

2. God commands believers to follow their pastors and teachers (We know, of course, it means real ones who are called of God and teaching the truth.)
3. That Greek word for follow is from “mimos”; where we get our word ‘mimic.’
4. If, as a leader, God commands His children to mimic your life, you ought to easily see the level of responsibility and accountability that must indeed come with it.
5. How many of us have proven the old saying that what you do in moderation, your children will do in excess.
6. This is absolutely true of young Christians.
7. There are things I cannot allow in my life at all; though not wrong in themselves would cause weaker Christians to stumble.

### **III. God would have us pay heed to the following critical instructions:**

A. Whatever we as leaders are is what our Church is most likely to become.

1. There is a big difference in what we are vs. simply what we do.



2. In **Acts Chapter 1** Jesus said we are to be witnesses.

**Acts 1:8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall **be** witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

3. He didn't say just go and witness, He said **BE** a witness!

4. Just like Paul commanded that we **BE** examples, not just put on a show of such.

*B. The following is a list of critical traits that are to become a part of who and what we are:*

1. Back in our text, vs. 13 says: *And be at peace among yourselves.*

a. **Matthew 5:9** **Blessed** *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

b. **1Peter 3:10-12**

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto

their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.

c. Always be ready to seek peace.

2. Vs. 14 says to: **warn them that are unruly**, We are to gently but firmly in love, let it be known that there are certain things that won't be tolerated in God's house.

3. Vs. 14 also says to: **comfort the feebleminded**. At first glance this could include a lot of us; this "comfort" means to encourage and "feebleminded" means the faint-hearted.

4. We are also to: **support the weak**. This a term that means to hold on to those who are faltering. We don't just let people fall away without trying to help them.

5. Next is "**be patient**." We keep on. We work at it. We never give up! We don't quit!

6. We never render evil for evil!

**1Thessalonians 5:15** See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.

**a. 1Peter 3:8-9**

8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

**b. Romans 12:16-18**

16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

**7. 1Thessalonians 5:16 Rejoice evermore.**

There is nothing more encouraging than being around someone who is happy, positive and rejoicing.

a. On this we all need work; me especially when I get worn down with the knee pain or some other burden.

b. A smile and a hug from someone who is rejoicing in the Lord is priceless! You can be that someone!

**8. 1Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.**  
Always be talking to the Lord; and especially the listening part!

**9. 1Thessalonians 5:18** In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

- a. You cannot always be thankful for everything, but if you know Jesus you can be thankful IN it.
- b. Jane and Michael both have cancer; it may well kill both of them; but we are thankful they don't have to face it alone and we are thankful that thanks to Jesus, the worse that disease can do it send them to heaven!

**In Conclusion: There are three more items on this list in our text today.**

**The next one should be exercised right now: Verse 19: Quench not the Spirit.**

**Don't push the Spirit of God aside; instead, respond; say yes; and deal with what God is speaking to your heart about.**

**The next one also should be exercised right now:**

**1Thessalonians 5:20** Despise not prophesyings.

**In this day, this means the preaching of the Word.**

**Next, we are to:**

**1Thessalonians 5:21** Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

**We go by what we can verify in the Word, not just by our feelings!**

**1Thessalonians 5:22** Abstain from all appearance of evil.

**To be an example, you must give up some things that may not be in themselves wrong; but may lead others to harmful excess.**

**What a small price to pay that we might live at peace TOGETHER in Christ. What a small price that we might succeed TOGETHER as the Body of Christ fulfilling our Great Commission from the Lord.**

**What is it worth to you that we might be together? Let me remind us of what it was worth to Jesus:**

**1Thessalonians 5:9-10**

9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.