

Pt 4 - COMMITMENT – Putting Down Roots

True community has to be intentional and nurtured. Intentional community is a core responsibility of being an active member of a church family.

The Bible states that creating authentic community is a spiritual ‘*discipline.*’ It takes a conscious decision to create a supportive, vibrant and close community with others.

Hebrews 10:23-25 (niv)

... Let us hold unswervingly

Life seems to be designed to knock us off our faith. To keep us from making consistent steady progress in our relationship with God.

Even the most seasoned and experienced Christian can stray off course. Life has no favourites.

What is the key to not swerving off course?

Hebrews 10:23 (msg) *So let's do it - full of belief, confident that we're presentable inside and out. Let's keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps His word.*

A key to not swerving is standing firm in God, knowing that as we trust in Him, He will help guide us and keep us on track.

Hebrews 10:24 (niv) *Let us consider how we may spur one another on...*

... Spurring one another on

A western cowboy would use the spurs on the back of his boots to motivate a reluctant horse to ride forward or to turn left or right.

The spurs were used as an encouragement. They were used as a motivational technique that helps keep the horse focussed.

We are to spur one another on ... but onto what?

Hebrews 10:24 (niv) *let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

We are to encourage one another, even to prod and poke each other forward so that together we make steady progress in our relationship with God whilst doing good. This is what intentional community is; riding together spurring one another on and staying on course.

... Intentional community is deciding to put down roots.

We need to be committed into a church family where we can be a part of an authentic community.

We will have a much better chance when life throws us a curve ball to stay on track and not swerving all over the place when we are in a life giving circle of friends that care for us.

This is what being in community is all about. Opening ourselves up to another’s gentle poking and prodding. Giving those close to us and who care for us to speak into our lives helping us to stay on track.

Some people fail to commit to put their roots down into a church – because of accountability.

Mutual encouragement is one way how God designed us to grow.
We need others – and others need us!

Hebrews 10:24 ^(niv) *let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

... We are spurred on to love and good deeds.

This is the goal of intentional community – to love and to do good deeds for others.

God never designed us to live life in isolation but in community. Nor is our faith meant to be isolated or private. Whilst our relationship with God is personal – the outworking of our Christian life is to be public.

... Living in isolation is a recipe for swerving off course

Hebrews 10:25 ^(niv) *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Sequoia Redwood Trees

These trees are 2.5 metres to as much as 6 metres in diameter, and some as tall as 115 metres high.

But the amazing thing with these monsters is the mature Sequoia roots are on average 1.5 metres deep but the roots can spread up to 75 metres wide. The root system is massive but very shallow in relation to the size of the tree above ground level.

When these trees are planted in clumps the roots of all the trees become tangled, interlocked and connected. Underneath ground level they network by criss-crossing which holds each tree tight and secure.

We need to be interlocked with one another in community to be able to withstand the enormous weight and pressure life forces upon us.

Trouble will find us. We don't have to go looking for it. Trouble has a knack of finding us!

Ecclesiastes 4:12 *A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.*

Hebrews 10:25

If we don't have our roots down in a spiritual family where we are connected tightly, then when trouble comes we will tend to drift away.

To drift away from those who are there to support us and sadly drift away from the presence of God.

Genuine loving relationships provide the care that people need and the context in which life transformation can take place.

... Application

Will you commit to putting down your spiritual roots into our church family?

But how?

Specifically, we call people to four basic commitments:

- **The Membership Commitment**

This is a commitment to Jesus Christ and the church family.

Ephesians 2:19 *'Consequently', you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.*

- **The Maturity Commitment**

This is a commitment to developing Godly habits necessary for spiritual growth.

1 Timothy 4:7 *Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourselves to be Godly.*

- **The Ministry Commitment**

This is a commitment to use our gifts and abilities to serve God and His people, and to share the Good News with those who are lost.

1 Peter 4:10 *Each one should use whatever gift he (she) has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

- **The Mission Commitment**

This is a commitment to serve the Lord in the field of ministry He has equipped us for.

2 Corinthians 10:13 *But we will not boast of authority we do not have. Our goal is to stay within the boundaries of God's plan for us, and this plan includes our working there with you.*

Why do we have these commitments?

Basically, we become what we are committed to!