

Restoring the Joy of Conversing with God - **Together Restoring The Joy of Conversing With God**

A. Togetherness is important to God by design

For example:

- a. God called and promised Abraham that through him the ethnic groups of the world would be blessed
- b. God called Moses to bring out a people out of which he formed a nation to be a light to all other nations
- c. God called Jonah to call an entire city to repentance
- d. Three vivid metaphors in the NT gives us a picture of togetherness
 - i. Head and body (Eph. 5:23; Col 1:18)
 - ii. Vine and branches (John 15:5)
 - iii. Cornerstone and temple (Eph. 2:19-21)

Warnings:

- a. Some emphasize the unity and relationship of the members of the Body to the exclusion of Christ.
- a'. Ephesians 4:3, *"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*

Paul is clear that it's not just unity between ourselves that we are to work for, but unity amongst ourselves AND the Spirit.

- b. Some emphasize the relationship between individuals with Christ to the exclusion of the other members of the Body.

b'. 1 Corinthians 12:21, 27, *"The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."*

We are to be sharing a common life with Christ, and in and through Christ with every other Christians. God will not prosper the pride of those who think they can get along without the help of other believers.

B. Why Community and Togetherness on earth is important to God

1. Togetherness is an extension of who God is

- a. God is three persons in one – the trinity

John 17:20-23, *"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."*

- b. For example, we are the extension of our parents. Try introducing yourself to others by saying, I am (your name) son or daughter (of your father's name) from the clan of (your father's last name) and the clan of (your mother's last name).

- c. My example hypothetically, I am Sam son of Yung Ching from the clan of Lee and the clan of Chan.

2. Togetherness is the means of our own discipleship and sanctification

- a. Iron sharpens iron

- b. Ephesians 4:11-16, ¹¹“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”
- c. We need others to equip us for the worlds of service God has ordained for us.
- d. For example, in food preparation, salt enhances sweet and vice versa.

3. Such unity bears witness to a different kind of Kingdom

- a. John 13:34-35, ³⁴“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
- b. The world cannot fathom a community existing without the division and condemnation and fighting characteristic of world communities.
- c. For example, in food preparation, if you taste a dish, sometimes you may say it needs some salt etc. At times when you taste a very flavourful dish, you will also know that all the flavours are working together. Similarly, to Christian communities, our unity bears witness to the Gracious Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

4. Church community (togetherness) pictures what heaven will be like

- a. This unity is a foretaste of our togetherness in heaven
- b. Rev. 5:11-13; 7:9-12; 19:1-5 describe for us our ultimate togetherness in a great company that includes countless angels, the gathering of the firstborn (Christians now departed?), God the Father, spirits of the righteous made perfect (OT saints?), and Jesus Christ Himself!
- c. Obviously, this moment we are not yet in heaven in the full sense
- d. Picture this, an instrument like the clarinet outside of a symphony orchestra can be very different when the clarinet is part of a symphony orchestra. The harmonic sounds of other instruments joined together took it to whole new heights which can be exhilarating.
- e. Revelation 14:2-3a, ²“And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. ³And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders.”
- f. Heaven will be an unending enjoyment of togetherness in worship, where every person present will join in!

Summary: Together Restoring The Joy of Conversing With God

- A. Togetherness is important to God by design
1. When you read the Bible, picture a culture that togetherness is valued.
 2. Ask God to change our heart to that kind of culture when we see and serve with one another.
- B. Reasons Why Community and Togetherness on earth is important to God
1. Togetherness is an extension of who God is
 2. Togetherness is the means of our own discipleship and sanctification

3. Such unity bears witness to a different kind of Kingdom
4. Church community (togetherness) pictures what heaven will be like