

GROWTHguide

"Never Alone"

May 7, 2017



THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Galatians 6:2, Romans 13:81,
John 3:18, Daniel 1:6-21 and 2:17-18

DAY 1

People want to be wanted, but the truth is we are living in a world marked by loneliness. Certain sociological conditions may have become the enemy of natural community and have made it necessary for us to place an intentional emphasis on building Christian community.

- In general, what do you feel drives people into loneliness?
- In his message, Pastor Bob listed some of the big forces driving people into loneliness including: the changing family, the disappearance of neighborhoods, fragmentation of our lives, spectator culture, societal values, expectations of church community. There are many ways in which our society today leaves us isolated. Do any of these resonate with you? How have they affected you personally?
- Are there other triggers that make you feel lonely? Why?

DAY 2

[Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12](#)

- What does the writer point out in this text?

- What is he saying about "community?"
- In what ways would you find grace and love by living by these words?

DAY 3

In his works, Henri Nouwen writes, ***Nothing is sweet or easy about community. Community is a fellowship of people who do not hide their joys and sorrows but make them visible to each other in a gesture of hope. In community we say, 'Life is full of gains and losses, joys and sorrows, ups and downs - but we do not have to live it alone. We want to drink our cup together and thus celebrate the truth that the wounds of our individual lives, which seem intolerable when lived alone, become sources of healing when we live them as part of a fellowship of mutual care.'***

- How can you relate to what Nouwen writes?
- Think of some examples of how when you share your life with other believers your "gains and losses, joys and sorrows, ups and downs..." expand your heart rather than deplete it.

DAY 4

Read [Galatians 6:2](#), [Romans 13:8](#)

The Bible contains many "**one another**" verses. God commands us to love one another at least 55 times in the New Testament alone. God's intent in these "one another" verses is not simply to give us commands to obey, but to set forth a new way of life

- Reflect on the phrase "**one another.**" What does this mean to you?

- How can you bear the burden of another by being part of a small group?
- What is the difference between "**knowing**" someone and "**caring**" for someone? Which is greater?

DAY 5

Read 1 John 3:18

- When it comes to being in Christian community with one another, how do our actions taken versus words expressed manifest this?
- The Bible speaks volumes that the actions of love are bearing one another's burdens, rejoicing with others, sharing insight and lessons learned, edifying one another, helping one another, listening to one another, and sharing goods with one another. How are you doing when it comes to these actions of love for others?

DAY 6

Reread Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

Use the Message version below:

It's better to have a partner than go it alone.

Share the work, share the wealth.

And if one falls down, the other helps,

But if there's no one to help, tough!

Two in a bed warm each other.

Alone, you shiver all night.

By yourself you're unprotected.

With a friend you can face the worst.

Can you round up a third?

A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped.

Pastor Bob pointed out the importance of all of us connecting with a small group so that we are living into the model developed by the early Christian church. He helped

us to understand small groups aren't a new program for the church, small groups are "being" the church. Small groups:

- Follow the example of Jesus
- Allow us to discover God's ministries through groups of people

Read Daniel 1:6-21 and 2:17-18

- How did these men band together in a small group to maintain their relationship with God and support one another through prayer?

DAY 7

Today is your Sabbath. Take time today to reflect on what you read and thought about this week and begin to formulate your next steps to Glorify God, Grow in Faith and Give in Love.

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St. Paul United Methodist Church
1199 Highland Ave. | Largo, FL 33770
727-584-8165 | church@stpaulumc.org

www.stpaulumc.org



St. Paul United Methodist Church, 1199 Highland Avenue, Largo, FL 33770

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