

## Daily Devotional, June 29, 2020 Loving One Another

***“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” John 13:34 (NIV)***

This verse seems so simple, so straightforward. We might refer to this notion as being similar to The Golden Rule, or even common sense! How many times have you said, “I just wish we could all get along and love one another?” Whether it be in a marriage or with our families or with our relations in the workplace, or what we view in politics or in the world, it seems so simple that loving one another would solve so many problems – and maybe even lead to world peace! Well, I can dream, can’t I?

In our individualistic society, many of us often feel alone. Sometimes we *are* actually alone; but at other times we are simply *feeling* lonely. Others of us, hardened by our culture, decide it is better that we are by ourselves and determine that we do not need the help of others. However, when we dig into Scripture, we discover the truth, in that we were created for community. God created us not to live in isolation, but rather to be people who live life with others. The most important way that we as Christians live in community is by belonging to the church.

When our society thinks of what community is, it often thinks of an organization or a social club that is formed around a particular interest or call or need. But the church is so much more expansive. It is Christ’s “body”. And the relationships that we have with other Christians is depicted in the New Testament in the spirit of *koinonia*, a Greek word often translated as “fellowship.” It signifies that we as Christians are in communion with one another and join in life together. In addition, we also are in communion with Christ and take part in His life and mission. We are united in His body.

The fellowship of the church is most especially conveyed in diversity. God desires a transformation for us: to go from choosing to be with others who we are most like, into people who love and want to be with those who are *unlike* us, those we would typically not associate with.

As hard as this application might appear, if we would love one another, we will have less judgment of one another, and will not speak evil against each other. We will not irritate, be jealous of, or lie to each other. Instead, we will be kind and caring to each other, hold back judgment and forgive one another, submit to one another, and build each other up. We will graciously practice hospitality towards each other, encourage each other, advise and comfort one another, pray for each other and bear each other’s burdens. Even in our diversity we will become *more alike!*

Community should be seen as opportunity. Fellowship in the church becomes a tutor for us and a pathway for us to love and serve others, *even those outside the church*. Above all, the church is called to emulate the love of the Trinity. God exists in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is the true unity in diversity, and we are invited to not only share in the love of the Trinity, but also to extend that love to everyone we meet.

One reason for God establishing the church, is so that we can experience clearly, the love of Christ. Yet this love was never meant to be restricted to the community of the church. Rather, it should generously overflow into all of our communities, into our neighborhoods, and even including our workplaces. The love of Christ changes the way we see all of our places of community.

Our coworkers are not simply people who help us get our work done or help us to advance professionally. No, God has placed them in our lives so that we may love and serve them, even if they are profoundly different from us. We are called to love them, both in their good and bad traits, in order that they might succeed in their work, but also that they get to experience God’s love and mercy.

I encourage us all to make your Church family a priority in your life. As difficult as it may seem for us right now, in whatever way you can, through cards or phone calls or zoom or social media, when you surround yourself with Christians who can be there in the good times and hard times in life, you will encounter the

presence of the Living God and the joy of knowing you are not alone. When it gets hard, make sure to talk with someone who can help you continue in, "loving one another!" Let our church community provide words of hope to you that will lift you through the week.

***By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." John 13:35 (NIV)***

***Prayer: We thank you Father that we have entered into a new day, a new time, and a new season, this is the time for love, unity, forgiveness, revival, healing, restoration, and reconciliation. Father give us grace to love one another in words, give us grace to love one another in deeds, give us grace to love one another in prayer, give us grace to love one another in fellowship, and give us grace to love one another in mercy. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.***