



The Purpose of Community

Story from John 7

On the last day of the feast of tabernacles it was customary to perform a solemn ceremony in this manner: The priest filled a golden vial with water from the fount of Siloam which was borne with great solemnity, attended with the clangor of trumpets, through the gate of the temple, and being mixed with wine, was poured on the sacrifice on the altar. What was the origin of this custom is unknown. Some suppose, and not improbably, that it arose from an improper understanding of the passage in Isa 12:3: "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." It is certain that no such ceremony is commanded by Moses. It is supposed to be probable that Jesus stood and cried while they were performing this ceremony.

[John 7:37-39](#)

[37](#) On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. [38](#) He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." [39](#) But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

NKJV

Jesus said if anyone thirsts let Him come to me and drink. (John 7:37).

Within the soul of every man and every woman is a thirst for a relationship with God.

This thirst cannot be satisfied by anything else but God.

In this story Jesus declared to the Jews that He was the only one who could provide the way to satisfy this thirst.

His claim was based on who He was and what He would do for them.

Their sins separated them from God. Jesus knew His death would atone for their sins and the sins of the world.

If we will repent of our sin and follow Jesus, the thirst that we have for a relationship with God will be satisfied.

We become the temple of the Spirit of God.

End of story?

It would be the end of the story if God did not give us a mission.

His mission for us moving forward is that we would be transformed into the image of Jesus.

Rom. 8:29

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

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Jesus made it very clear that being transformed into His image would mean making disciples.

Matt. 4:19

19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

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Matt. 28:19

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

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Jesus said to fulfill the mission we need to be a part of His church.

Matt. 16:18

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

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Jesus did not say that the gates of hell would not prevail against me. Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church.

The universal church of Jesus Christ includes everyone in the world who has repented of their sins and is following Jesus.



The local church in the New Testament was a group of believers who joined together under Christ's leadership to become like Jesus and to make disciples!

The truth that we would need others to fulfill our mission was first introduced in the Garden of Eden.

Gen 1:27-28

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

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God created Adam and His mission for Adam was to have dominion over everything that He had created on the earth.

He could not do this on his own. He certainly could not be fruitful and multiply on his own. He needed others to fulfill His mission.

After we receive Jesus, we need a local church to fulfill our mission. We cannot fulfill our mission on our own.

It is our commission that compels our community in the local church!

This truth is as old as the history of our nation. This truth is seen in.....

The pilgrims



The laws of nature



Commerce



Sports



It is our commission that compels our community!

Commission is the foundation for strong marriages. Commission is the foundation for strong churches.

In the church our mission is to be like Jesus and to make disciples. This commission is what should compel us to be in community with a local church.

Statistics reveal that the vast majority of Christians in our nation have a low regard for community in their local church.

- Their attendance is sporadic
- Their giving is an after thought
- Their volunteer service is not taken seriously
- Their participation in small groups is optional
- Their submission to church leadership is missing

Most people that attend church attend either due to a conviction, friendship, or a felt need. You will never be a team player if one of these is your primary motivation for attending church.

While these motivations are important they should not be our primary motivation for being in community in our local church. Our primary motivation to be in community should be our commission to be like Jesus and our commission to make disciples.

The problem is that the vast majority of Christians have not accepted their commission. They have received Jesus to satisfy their thirst for God. But they have not received their

mission to become like Jesus and to make disciples. They have not understood that they cannot fulfill their mission on their own. They have very little motivation to be in community with a local church. As a result, they are not team players.

As we begin 2016 and start this new series on community, I want you to become a team player. I want you to evaluate why you are here! Why are you a part of our community that we call Western Hills?

The only sound foundation for a strong community in our local church is that we have accepted our mission and we know we need one another to fulfill our mission.

This morning as we begin the year 2016 as a local church, I want to ask you to do two things.

- Dedicate the remainder of your life to your mission.
- Dedicate yourself to work with our local church and our leadership to fulfill our mission.

Have you received Jesus to satisfy your thirst for God?

This week we saw the purpose of community. Next week we will begin to see the power and the promise of community.

Through our community in our local church we saw many great things happen in 2015.

As you know our small groups for discipleship and outreach are called Mission Teams. In 2014 we ended the year with 15 Mission Teams. In November we launched our 21st Mission Team. Our goal is to have 35 Mission Teams by the end of 2016.

We saw 64 salvation decisions as a result of our people sharing the gospel in our community.

We gave over \$13000 in financial assistance to the benevolent needs of our members. We have given over \$40000 in financial assistance to other mission organizations.