

We Believe in the Importance of Community (Ephesians 4:1-16)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 January 2026

Preacher: Brett Sanders

[0 : 00] It's a real joy to be able to gather again for normal services, but also for our Sunday school time. And I'm so thankful to have that opportunity to be able to do that.

If you have been coming for some time, you probably know that typically on Sunday mornings we go through a book of the Bible. We'll pick a book of the Bible and just work our way through that whole book.

We won't skip parts of it. We'll just make our way through that book. But over the last few weeks, we've been doing something a little different. We've been going through a series that we've titled We Believe.

And it's some core commitments that we affirm and we believe as a church are important to us, to this body of believers. And it's something that we want to make sure that we're all on the same page about.

It started a couple of weeks ago with We Believe in the Authority of Scripture and building our lives on God's Word. And that being our foundation.

[1 : 02] Last week, we moved to We Believe in the Power of Prayer. This week, we're going to be talking about the fact that we believe in the importance of community.

We believe in the importance of coming together as a body of believers and enjoying that time of fellowship. But also that this is something that God has called us to do.

Back in 2020, it was a hard year on many fronts. Many of us lost loved ones. Some had extended stays in the hospital, lost jobs.

Many churches that had never had online services like ours started online services. Clay and I still cringe when we think about some of those videos we put out just to try to encourage community during that time.

But schools closed. Unfortunately, some churches closed. Many difficulties that could be seen immediately during that time. But one of the lasting effects that was more difficult to see in the moment was the loss of community that we experienced.

[2 : 12] In fact, much research has been done in the last few years with a focus on mental health after the pandemic. And in some studies, it showed that nearly half of Americans in 2021 reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder.

And this showed in many different ways. This played out in many different ways. Substance abuse and excessive drinking spiked during this time as well as those reaching out to mental health professionals.

In fact, I have a very dear friend of mine who serves on the board of the Northeast Georgia Christian Counseling Center. And they have many counselors that are a part of that.

And he said over and over again during that time, they struggled to keep up with the demand of people needing to work through what was going on in their lives.

And I think it was a multifaceted issue that led to this. But one of the interesting topics of discussion right now that people are looking into revolves around the loss of community that people experienced.

[3 : 19] We were made to experience life with other people. And a pandemic that greatly reduced the ability to gather together and to be around others made this time very difficult.

However, much of the research that is out there, it's really interesting some of the studies and some of the findings that they're coming out with. Much of that research is showing that while, yes, Christians still struggle during this time like many others, they did find themselves able to work

through it in healthier ways.

One of the articles I was reading, it stated it like this. It said religious involvement is a very positive influence in people's lives. And it has been for a long time, says Harold Koenig, a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University.

So psychologists have long acknowledged religion as a potent coping mechanism, as well as a powerful protective factor for mental health.

And the pandemic was no exception. Now, obviously, I believe that faith in Christ and the community he provides in the church is more than a coping mechanism.

[4 : 31] But it's interesting when the academic community affirms what God has said all along. And so I want our focus of our time this morning to be on what healthy community looks like.

And for us to do that, I want us to spend some time looking through Ephesians chapter 4, verses 1 through 16. And so feel free to go ahead and make your way there. But before we get into that passage, there is something that I want us to bring our attention to.

I want to take just a moment to reflect on this. And so the first thing that I want us to consider this morning is the importance of gospel community. The importance of coming together as a community of believers who affirm the gospel message.

You see, the word community is used in a variety of contexts and can denote groups of people who have something in common. For example, we can speak of a farming community or an academic community or any number of groups for that matter.

But I also believe that there's biblical evidence for us to support the idea of a gospel community. A community, a fellowship of believers who are coming together.

[5 : 49] Most of the time when we see the word fellowship in scripture, it comes from a Greek word koinonia. And now this word also carries the idea of participation, partnerships, and sharing along with fellowship.

And in our Christian circles, the word fellowship has come to mean little more than just a Christian social activity. Sometimes sharing coffee together with someone or a social function or something that you do in a certain area of the church, right?

You go to the fellowship hall and that's where you fellowship, that's where you experience this.

However, this is not the meaning of fellowship in the New Testament. The first occurrence, in fact, of the word fellowship comes right after the formation of the church.

When we think of fellowship in relation to the church, this word appears right after the formation of the church in Acts 2, 42, where it says, And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship and the breaking of bread and the prayers.

And so we are not the least bit surprised when we see this to see that the early church was devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching. That makes sense, right? That they should know what the apostles were teaching because they're teaching them what Christ had taught them.

[7 : 10] And so we're not surprised by that. And we're not surprised that they were devoting themselves to prayer because this is something that we should be devoting ourselves to. And so we understand and affirm that they should be devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to prayer.

But it's in that same breath that he's saying they're devoting themselves to fellowship. Now, if fellowship is simply a social activity, then this wouldn't make sense at all.

This wouldn't be something that really makes sense to us if all fellowship is simply a social activity where we come together from time to time, share a meal, share a coffee, have a good time, play a game together, something like that.

It wouldn't make sense if that's all fellowship was. Jerry Bridges notes, he says, The first Christians of Acts 2, 42 were not devoting themselves to social activities, but to a relationship.

A relationship that consisted of sharing together the very life of God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They realized that their fellowship with God logically brought them into fellowship with one another.

[8 : 23] And so you see, fellowship is not primarily an activity, but fellowship is primarily a relationship. Fellowship is a relationship where it's a community of believers who are coming together, and it's something that we should be devoting our lives to.

It's not a thing we do. It's a partnership, a sharing of life. It is a community of believers who profess Christ as supreme in their lives.

And so as image bearers, people are made for community. The triune God is a relational God, and he's created us for relationships. This is important. This is something that we see from the very beginning.

And so to live apart from others is not only detrimental to us and our well-being, but it's also unlike Christ. To live in isolation is not only detrimental to us, but it's unlike Jesus.

It's unlike how he lived his life. When you look through the gospel accounts, so many times what you find is Jesus going from meal to meal, from house to house, spending time with people within this fellowship.

[9 : 36] It's something that he gave his life to. Now, yes, absolutely, there are times when he pulled back and had those personal quiet times with God, and he had some of that isolation that was in there.

But if you look at it, immediately after he finishes those times, he goes straight back into community. He goes straight back into relationships with others, and that's because this was important to him.

Tim Keller, he rightly says, he says, To need and want deep spiritual friendships is not a sign of spiritual immaturity, but of maturity.

It's not a sign of weakness, but it is a sign of health. Think back with me onto Genesis chapter 2.

Prior to sin entering the world, God created everything.

He said that it was good, right? Everything was perfect from the beginning when God created it. He created everything, and he declared it to be good except for one thing.

[10 : 36] And he says it's not good for man to be alone. And so even part of creation, before the fall happens, we see that we're made for this community.

Keller goes on to note, he says, Adam was not lonely because he was imperfect, but because he was perfect. The eight for friends is the one eight that's not the result of sin.

God made us in such a way that we couldn't even enjoy paradise without friends, human friends.

Adam had a perfect quiet time every single day for 24 hours a day, yet he needed friends.

And so if you're lonely, you aren't dysfunctional, you're fine. You're lonely because you're not a tree.

You're lonely because you're not a machine. You're lonely because you were built this way.

Now, I have to be careful, he says, that this, because of the reasons you may not have friends, is because of sin. But the passion for it, the need for it, the sense of lack of it is not wrong at all.

[11 : 41] And he goes on to challenge believers to see the need and to be open to cultivating those relationships. He says, friends, let yourself need friends.

Let yourself need people. Here's the trouble. When you're in trouble, it's too late. You know, very few people walk around saying, ah, I love air.

I just love air so much. It is so wonderful. Air, air, air. What good is my brain without air? What good would my life be without air? He says, you only sound that way when you're underwater.

Then you start to say, wow, air. I need air. And you don't walk around saying, I need friends until you emotionally and personally go under. And then it's too late.

If you don't already have them, he says, you need spiritual friendships. And so have you noticed whenever you watch shows and things like that on now, and there's not a lot of great shows to watch.

[12 : 41] But when you look at shows and you see the ones that really make it big and are and are something that lasts for many, many years. What you see is this these shows that are surrounded by community.

For example, community in the workplace. You have the office. And you see that, and it's something that's made its way around and still is making its way around in circles. And then you also see outside of the workplace in shows like Friends, where you see this community of friends who enjoy this time together.

Or going back a little bit further than that, a small town community that comes together in the Andy Griffith show. Some of you may identify with that and just understanding the importance of that.

But even outside of shows that are popular that deal with community, shows that in fact are as far from community as you can possibly get, like alone.

Then you see in those shows what people struggle with the most. Oftentimes it's not the elements.

It's not a lack of food. It's not any of those number of things. What people struggle with the most is pulling away from people.

[13:50] And pulling away from those friendships and that community that they experience. You see, God has given us a need for community. And he's given us the place where that need for community is met.

And it's the church. So for the remainder of our time this morning, I want us to take some time to consider what healthy gospel community looks like. What healthy gospel community looks like. You see, we all realize the need for health, right? We all realize that this is something that we should be focusing on at times. We live in a time where many people are concerned with health and fitness.

All you have to do is watch television to see commercials for supplements and memberships of all kinds of things. Jacob came home from the gym the other day right after New Year's and said, Wow, there must be a lot of New Year's resolutions right now because the gym was packed with people.

And so he recognized that people understand this need and we try to find that. In fact, I try sometimes to be health conscious myself. I appreciate you not laughing too hard about that.

[15:01] But I try at least sometimes. And it's frustrating because not too many years ago, I could go three days a week to work out. And it pretty much kept the pounds off.

It pretty much did its job. And at least on the outside, it looked healthy. And then all of a sudden, slowly, that started not being enough. And so this week, I finally realized, like, you know what? I've got to go five days a week.

And it's about to kill me. I'm just trying to do that all this week of having that cardio. And I'm trying now to convince myself that I believe that we all have a limited number of heartbeats.

And if we already have a number of heartbeats that God knows, and working out just burns through those a whole lot faster than if we didn't. And so I'm trying to convince myself of this.

But we all recognize the need for health in our lives. And just like there are things that we can do to improve our health and measure our fitness, we see in Scripture that there are things that are prevalent in healthy communities.

[16:03] And so to help us see this more clearly, I want to invite you to follow along as we read these 16 verses here in Ephesians chapter 4. And so follow along as we read God's Word.

It says this. I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.

In saying he ascended, what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

[17:18] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds or pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we attain the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood.

To that measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes.

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, for from him the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped. When each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. In many ways, Paul starts his letters with doctrine.

Many times, if you look through his letters to the church, he'll start them with doctrine, with gospel truth, where he clearly explains the gospel. A lot of times he does this before he even gets into the outworkings of the gospel, the outworkings of this knowledge.

[18:38] And Ephesians is no different than this. In fact, Ephesians 2, verses 1 through 10, is one of my favorite pictures of the gospel in all of Scripture. We see our desperate need for Christ.

We see that we're all dead in our trespasses and sins, that there's no hope for us but God. But God, being rich in mercy, made a way for us to have hope.

And we see that clearly presented here. But then he gives us a challenge. In light of who Christ is and our relationship with him, there are some things that should be prevalent in our lives.

There are some things that should naturally work their way out into our lives and into the church.

And so here in Ephesians 4, Paul speaks to the body of Christ, the church, and he lets us know what are some characteristics of a healthy church.

What are some characteristics of a healthy community? And so in this passage, I want to bring our attention to a few characteristics of a healthy gospel community.

[19 : 48] And so to begin with, we see a healthy community is unified in the gospel. A healthy community is unified in the gospel. It says, And so to begin with, we are called to be unified.

That is our calling. Paul says we are to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. Now this is not the first time that Paul uses the word walk to describe how we are living our lives.

He says it back in Ephesians 2 in reference to our manner of living before we come to faith in Christ. We are dead in our trespasses and sins in which we once walked.

We are walking as that was our lifestyle. Now we walk or our conduct of life in a way that is different. And as believers, we are unified in this.

We come together as believers who walk differently. And we walk differently together. We walk in a manner worthy of our calling. In so many ways in this section, it is talking about the importance of believers being unified in the gospel.

[21 : 14] Not only does it speak of unity, but it also highlights this by giving us what many scholars believe is one of the first creeds of the church.

This next section that Paul shares here is what many believe is one of the first few creeds of the church that the churches were affirming when they came together. They were saying this and reciting these things together.

And in this it says there is one body and one spirit. Just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call. One Lord.

One faith. One baptism. One God and Father who is over all and through all and in all. In this section, Paul's concern is to stress the church's unity.

We see at the beginning of verse 4 there is one body. Body is a metaphor for the church. The church is compared to several things throughout scripture. And even in the book of Ephesians, we see the church compared to different things.

[22 : 16] But comparing the church to a body is helpful and shows the importance of this unity of it working together. A body, when functioning properly, works together.

It also is important for us to see that this being a part of a follower of Christ is that we are unified together with other believers. Paul tells us that we are to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

You see, Paul didn't say to attain the unity of the spirit, but rather maintain it. Tony Morita notes, he says, we can't ultimately create Christian fellowship.

God establishes it. But it's our job then to cultivate it, to work it, to maintain it. And so if you maintain something regularly, then you make sure that you give it maintenance when it is required.

God has given us the gift of community. A healthy church has a unity about it. This doesn't mean that we agree on everything.

[23 : 24] It doesn't mean that we're all the same. It doesn't mean that we compromise our beliefs for the sake of unity. But it does mean that our focus is so much on Christ that the things that we may disagree about pale in comparison to who Christ is.

The unity within the community is something, is not something that we created, but it is something that he has called us to maintain.

And so how do we maintain it? How do we maintain this unity within the church by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus? There are so many things that try to grab our attention in life.

There are so many things that try to pull our attention away from Jesus. And when we take our eyes off of him, that's when we see this unity creeping into the church. Yesterday, the men's conference had a wonderful time of men coming together.

And Pastor Quintel Hill was one of the speakers. And I remember him saying just yesterday, he kind of added a little bit to a very popular quote. But he says, the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing and to let the main thing do his thing.

[24 : 37] The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing and to let the main thing do his thing. By keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, we let God work in powerful ways in our lives.

By keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, it will help us more than anything to maintain unity within the church. The next statement is almost going to sound a little bit like a contradiction to what I just said.

You know, a healthy church has a sense of unity that goes along with it. But also what we see in this passage is a healthy community is spiritually diverse.

A healthy community is spiritually diverse. It says, but grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore, it says, when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men.

And saying he ascended, what does it mean but that he also descended into the lower regions, the earth. He who descended is the one who has ascended far above all the heavens that he might fill all things.

[25 : 49] And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Now, it's important to remember that unity does not mean sameness. To have a sense of unity doesn't mean that we're all a bunch of robots.

It doesn't mean that we all like the same things, do the same things, have the same gifts. In these verses, Paul shows us how the church, with all of its diversity, functions in a healthy way.

To begin with, we see that we are diverse in our giftings, in the things that God has given us, in our abilities and gifts that God has given us.

We're diverse in this. God has not given us all the same gift. We see that being taught here, but also in greater detail than Paul's other letters. In fact, we are to celebrate the fact that we have different gifts.

[26 : 53] He says that every believer has received a gift or grace. Now, this is not the saving grace that he's talking about back in Ephesians chapter 2.

But this is ministry grace. The gifts he gives to believers. And praise God, we all have different gifts. I think Catherine will be the first one to say, Amen, I'm glad everybody's not like Brett.

I'm glad that we all have different gifts and abilities within the church. And this is the beauty of the church, that we are spiritually gifted in different ways, and we're diverse in those giftings.

And so with those diverse gifts, we also see that we're different and diverse in our responsibilities. Christ gave us gifts so that we would use them.

We're diverse in our responsibilities that he's called us. These responsibilities are different for different believers. And each of them has the same value to God, but they share different roles.

[27 : 57] God doesn't want us to be jealous of someone else's gifts, but rather he wants us to use our gifts. We're not called to be jealous of someone else's gifts.

We're called to use the gifts that God has given us. And so the question we must ask ourselves as believers is this. Are we going to ride the bench or are we going to get in the game?

Are we going to ride the bench and not use those gifts and abilities that God has given us, or are we going to get in the game? I can remember in high school, people that I played football with, there were many people on the football team who wanted to play, who wanted to be out there, who wanted to get in the game.

But I can remember there's a lot of people out there that just like to put on that uniform on Friday nights as well. And in fact, they wanted to do anything but get in the game on Friday nights.

They just wanted to be out there. In fact, throughout the week, they would try to hide and stay behind everybody and make sure they didn't have to go into practice and do different things. And so they loved to kind of stay behind the scenes.

[29 : 01] They wanted to be a part of the team, but they didn't want to actually contribute to the team. They wanted to be there and to hang out with everybody, but they didn't actually want to get in the game. They didn't want to participate in the game.

And sure, when people looked on the outside, they saw more people on the field. They saw, oh, this is a big team. Look at all those people that are out there. But it wasn't people who were contributing

to the team.

You see, God didn't equip us as believers to ride the bench. He wants all of his children in the game. There's too much work to be done to not be used by the king.

Jesus says, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. A healthy community of believers is diverse in its gifts. It's diverse in its responsibilities, but it actually uses the gifts.

It actually uses what God has given them. And so finally, in this passage, we see that a healthy community is constantly growing spiritually.

[30 : 10] A healthy community is constantly growing spiritually. Verses 13 through 16 says, Until we attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness and deceitful schemes, rather speaking truth in love.

We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

You see, the result of the church's unity and diversity is maturity. The result of a healthy church who is unified around the gospel, the result of a healthy church who is diverse in its gifts and responsibilities and actually uses them, is a church that is growing in maturity.

This maturity involves us growing more and more like Christ. It involves us growing up. As believers, we all start as babies.

But a healthy baby grows. That is one of the signs that you can know that a child is healthy is that it is growing. Children need to grow in their knowledge and understanding of things.

[31 : 46] This is why we send them to school. This is why we homeschool. This is why we teach them things. It's because they need to grow in their knowledge of things. Right now, there are probably very few things that I couldn't convince Charlotte to believe.

Charlotte's our six-year-old. There's probably very few things that I couldn't convince her to believe if I really tried. In fact, I could probably tell her that the moon is made of cheese and make a pretty convincing argument for her, and she would believe me.

Now, Jacob and Ressie, not a chance. They're like, you're crazy, Dad. I know that it's not made of cheese. I know that it's not. But as children, as babies, as infants, we can be gullible sometimes.

It can be easy to believe something that's not true. Children are gullible and often easily deceived. They must be taught. I often say it like this.

If you don't know the truth, if you don't know God's Word, if you're not building your life on this, if you don't know truth, then it becomes very easy to believe a lie. It becomes really easy to believe whatever somebody else is telling you about something.

[32 : 56] However, if you do know truth, if you do know what God's Word says, then it becomes really easy to spot a lie when you see it. It becomes really easy to say, that's not right.

That's not true. And I know this because I know truth. I know what our lives are to be built on. I mean, a healthy church is marked by spiritual growth.

False teachers prey on the vulnerable and say things like, all religions are the same. It doesn't matter what you believe. As long as you believe in something, you'll eventually get to the same place.

Vulnerable people may believe things like, if you're a good person, then you'll get to heaven one day. Just try harder. Be good enough. They may believe things like, the Bible is just one of many religious books.

But when we know the truth, it becomes easy to spot a lie. A healthy church is marked by spiritual growth. And the primary way that we grow is by reading God's Word and through prayer.

[33 : 59] And so church, I want us to see this morning that community is vital to our lives. I want us to see very clearly that community and fellowship with one another is something that we were created for, that God wants us to experience in this life that's important for us to have as a part of our life.

I'm so thankful that we're able to start back Sunday school today, that we'll be able to start back these life groups, because this is where we get to experience community and fellowship in really powerful ways.

And so if you're not involved in one of those areas, we would love to connect you with a class that you can either come to on Sunday mornings, come to on Wednesday nights. We would love to make those connections for you, because this is not just a good idea, but it's something that is a necessity in our lives.

But I also want us to clearly see from the passage today that a healthy community is unified in the gospel. It is diverse in its gifts and its responsibilities, and it is constantly growing spiritually. It's constantly maturing. And so may we pray this morning that God would show us what it means to be a healthy community following Him.

[35 : 21] Maybe this morning you need to give your life to Jesus, and that's the first place that you need to start. To experience this community, you need to be unified in the gospel.

So maybe for you, you need to clearly understand the gospel message that Paul has already presented in Ephesians. You need to understand the gospel so clearly presented here that there is only one way to God, and it is through Jesus.

Let that be your first step. But church, if that has been your step in the past, don't let that be your last step. Let's continue walking, continue maturing.

Maybe today we need to take a look at our lives and see if we are contributing to the unity or disunity in the church. And if it's the latter, we need to repent.

If we're causing disunity with our actions, by our words, by what we're saying to others, we need to repent of that and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Maybe it's time that we get in the game.

[36 : 26] Maybe it's time that we stop standing on the sidelines. We stop hanging back and trying to play this safe and keep everything at a little bit of a distance.

And maybe it's time that we get in the game, that we get in what God has called us to do, to be a part of reaching our community, to be a part of using our gifts that He's given to us that are different from those around you, and that we can use those in other areas of responsibilities, that we can use those for the building up of His church.

Maybe we need to take an honest look at our lives and see if we are growing in the way that we should be. Are we growing as a community?

And the way that we grow as a community is that we grow as individuals within the community, that we spend time in God's Word, that we want to grow in that relationship, and that through that we want to bring others alongside us and help them to grow, and we grow as a community, as a fellowship of believers.

And so this morning, I hope that we can clearly see that community is vital to our lives. It's what we were created for. It's what gives our life meaning and purpose.

[37 : 40] It's what allows us to experience joy in this life that we couldn't otherwise experience, and that we're unified in that around the gospel. And so this morning, I want to encourage you to think about your life.

Are you plugged into that community? Do you have that healthy community in your life? And how can we all contribute to building up healthy community within the church? Father, thank you so very much for who you are.

Thank you for what you've done for us. Thank you for saving us, for making a way for us to be able to go from death to life. Thank you for making a way for us to be able to go from your enemy to your child, to welcome us into your family.

And so, Lord, that's what we celebrate today, that you have saved us, that you have changed our eternity, but you've also saved us into a fellowship with other believers, a community that breathes life into our life, that we get to share life with, that we get to do life with.

And so, Lord, I pray that you be with us as a community of believers. Help us to stay unified in the gospel. Help us to keep a relationship with you as the central focus of everything that we say and do.

[38 : 59] Help us to keep our eyes fixed on you. And Lord, I pray that you would give us the boldness to use the giftings, the gifts that you have given to us for your honor and your glory.

Lord, help us not to just have these gifts, but help us to use them. Use them to benefit the community, to grow your kingdom.

So, Lord, give us the boldness to do that. And Lord, I pray that as we do these things, that we would constantly be growing in our maturity, growing in our Christ-likeness, growing in our understanding of who you are and what you've done for us.

And so, Father, we thank you for all that you do. And we ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to invite you to stand. We're going to sing a song of invitation right now. If the Lord is speaking to you, won't you respond as we stand together and sing?
Amen.