

# The Four-Fold Purpose of the Church - Part 2

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. It's good to see all of you this morning. For the last several weeks, we've been working through the book of Acts and coming to understand a little bit more about the church. We've answered the question, what is the church? And over last week and this week, we're going to try to answer the question, what is the purpose of the church? So I'd encourage you, if you would please, to turn in your Bibles to Acts chapter 2, verse 42. That's where we will be this morning. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 911. What is the purpose of the church?

One of the things I love about Maranatha is its commitment to missions. And especially in its commitment to missions, in sending their young people, their teens, on missions trips every summertime. I've had the joy of the last several years to be able to lead one of those trips. And it is an example, to me at least, and I think to the teens, of your commitment to giving them opportunities to see Jesus in a real personal way and to be able to part of ministering the work of the gospel, encouraging individuals who need to hear about the Lord in a special way. Well, a couple years ago, we went to a place in Chicago called Inner City Impact. And we tend to do that during the July 4th weekend, because on July 4th, we get to take a little break and go into Chicago and enjoy some time together. When we do that, there's a spot down Millennium Park. I'm sure many of you have been there, the big chrome bean that's there in Millennium Park. One of my favorite things to do, however, is to go and to listen to the orchestra as they prepare and get ready for their performance on July 4th evening. Now, those of you who have been part of hearing an orchestra, especially a good one, will kind of know how it works. At least there in Chicago, the orchestra would come, and they would always come at kind of different times, not necessarily show up at the same time. They would take their seat.

They would begin to play. Now, they would each be playing their own thing. You know, the violins be playing their thing. Each individual kind of working on the part of the song that they needed to fine tune.

And then there's a moment, right? That one moment where that one instrument now plays that note, and then the rest of the orchestra will tune their instruments to that one instrument, that main instrument, that standard instrument that kind of sets the tone, sets the cue, sets the note for the rest of the orchestra. It really is an amazing moment when all of these instruments begin to find alignment and tune their instruments to that one instrument that's providing the standard.

That's kind of what we see in our text this morning. We see one standard, one note that's being played. It's the note that Christ has played for his church, and it's a note that the rest of the church begins to enjoy as they're harmonizing and aligning their lives to this one note, Jesus Christ.

[ 3 : 42 ] Christ and the church is beginning to demonstrate its oneness, its oneness to Christ and their oneness to one another. You know, each of us have our own occupations. We have our own priorities. We have our own families. We have our own hobbies. We have our own activities and interests. But the beautiful part about being a member of a church and being part of a church is as we align ourselves to the teaching that we'll see this morning from our passage, it will begin to play out in the harmony of the rest of us demonstrating oneness, oneness to Christ and oneness to one another. You see, when the church gathers, God does something for us. He brings us back to that one fixed constant. He tunes our hearts to himself. And as he tunes our hearts to him, then when we play and when we do what God has called us to do, there's harmony. There's alignment. We recognize that all of our activities, however uncoordinated they might be at various times, need to be brought back into alignment to the Lord. And that's the beauty of what we will look at this morning in Acts chapter 2. We'll see this beauty and harmony beginning to take shape in this church as they're aligning their hearts to the Lord Jesus.

As we ask the question, what is the purpose of the church? Last week, we began by mentioning there's a fourfold purpose. There's something that God has called all of us to do, not just as a conglomerate, as a community, but even individually, there are priorities that God has set for us. And you can see those priorities here in the banners behind me. But essentially, he's called us all to worship. You are and I am to be a worshiper. God has called us all to discipleship, to make disciples in all the nations. God has called us to fellowship. He's called us to unity. And God has called us to evangelism. He's called us to share that truth, that gospel light to the world around us. And so we began to look at that last week, and we kind of centered those priorities around a word that starts with B to help us remember them. So worship is bow. Discipleship is build. Evangelism is bless. And our unity or fellowship is our belonging together. And I want to look at them worship briefly just to remind you of what we covered last week. And for those of you who weren't here to kind of bring you into our discussion on Acts chapter 2 verses 42 to 47, and then pick it up with discipleship in just a few minutes here. The first question we ask is, what is worship? What is worship? And we saw from Acts chapter 2 verse 42 that worship begins with knowing God truly. It begins with knowing God. We saw that you can't worship a God that you don't know. And so God has revealed himself. He revealed himself in creation. He revealed himself through his son, Jesus Christ. The word of God was made flesh. He dwelt among us.

Why? Well, so that we would know him. And in knowing him, then we can worship him. And that's what we see in verse 42 of Acts chapter 2. It says, and they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, the breaking of bread in the prayers. There was a learning aspect. There was a knowing aspect. There was a teaching aspect so that those who were part of this fellowship of believers could know the Lord Jesus and could worship him the way that he deserved. We see that in Romans chapter 10 verses 14 to 17. It says this, how then will they call on him who they have not believed? And how will they believe on him whom they've not heard? And how will they hear without someone preaching? How are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news. So faith comes from hearing in hearing through the word of Christ. Worship begins with knowing God. I wonder this morning, do you know God truly? Not just things about God, but do you know who God is truly? And that's where the apostle Peter starts. He starts in his message back in verse 22 to speak about who Jesus is.

The focal point, the center of worship is knowing him. And so Peter talked about Jesus, his nature, that he is fully man and fully God, that he died, that he rose again, that he's now seated at the right hand of God, the Father, so that you could know him. And so that in knowing him, you could worship him.

[ 8 : 56 ] Well, worship then leads to loving God supremely. You see, their affection for the Lord Jesus is seen, it's visible in their affection for one another. And as we work through this passage, it's going to be absolutely abundantly clear that they love one another. They enjoy being with one another. There is an affection, a sincere desire to be in community, in relationship with one another.

But that's how it works. You know the first and second great command. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And then the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And the two work in harmony. They don't work independently. We know that we love God truly when we love God's people fervently and sincerely.

It's clear in how we respond to others that our affection and our love for God is real or artificial. So we will love. We will love God. And we'll love others that God has put us in relationship with.

We also saw that worship results in obeying God sincerely. In obeying God sincerely. You see, when we love God, we do the things that God loves. We do the things that God wants. We seek to carry out the instructions that God has given to us. It's a way for us to express our love for Him. It's a way for us to enjoy and experience His love for us. As we come to know what His Word says, we work it out in our life.

And we demonstrate that there is this real, genuine relationship that we have with Him. I love how the psalmist puts this in Psalm 119. In verse 97, it says this, Oh, how I love your law. I meditate on it all day long. Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble. I wonder, are you growing in your love for the Word of God?

[ 11 : 08 ] And you can begin to recognize your love for the Word of God in your obedience to the things that God has instructed us to do. Not as obligation, but as a means by which we can say, yes, I love you. I love your law. I love what you instruct. I want to do what you say, because I love

you and want to express to others your worthiness. My worship plays out in obedience to Him. So that's the first priority that we see. And the next is this, is discipleship. But what is discipleship? Well, we begin to see discipleship again playing out in verse 42 when it says this, They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers. That key word right at the beginning of this verse is our first point. Discipleship begins with devotion to Christ. It begins with devotion to Christ. Notice, and they devoted themselves. Devoted themselves. Maybe a better translation would be, and they were devoting themselves. It's actually a participle. It helps us understand the ongoing nature of this activity in their life. It wasn't a one-time thing, but expressed this ongoing character and quality, this mark of this people who were devoting themselves to all of these areas. This devotion was expressed in this ongoing commitment to this priority. They continued steadfastly. They remained. They persisted. This was not just a passing emotion, but a settled pattern of life. And so they moved from being just an assembled group of individuals, a bunch of people who just kind of came and assembled in one space. And now we're beginning to see that they belong to one another.

They're devoted to one another. They're engaged in life with one another. They have moved from this assembled crowd to this devoted crowd. And we see that this is not just a passing fad in their life.

We see this now becomes kind of the mark of who they are. We see that in verse 14 of chapter 1. That's where it all began. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer. And then in our passage in chapter 2 verse 46, and day by day attending temple together. That's the same word devoted. They were continuing in this expression of worship together. We see their oneness in chapter 2 verse 46. So continuing daily with one accord. And then in chapter 4, we see now the full number of those who believed were of one heart. They were connected. They were together. They were united as a people. And then in chapter 5 verse 12, it says, many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles, and they were all together. One more. We see their devotion to one another in Acts chapter 6 verse 4. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. Devotion to Christ was an expression of their everyday. It fashioned them. It formed them. And their devotion was first to the Lord Jesus. As we look at discipleship throughout the gospels, we see how it all began. It began with devotion to Christ. As you remember, Christ consistently says, follow me. Follow me. That's the ongoing beckoning plea. Follow me. Devote yourselves to me. See that in Matthew chapter 4 verse 19. It says, and he said to them, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And of course, devotion to the Lord Jesus, following after him, sometimes requires a cost. We see that in Luke chapter 9 verses 23 to 25. It says, and he said to all, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? You see, devotion to Christ is often costly. But as you know, the more you come to know Jesus for yourself, the more you realize how precious he is. Yes, discipleship might be costly, but Jesus is precious. He's precious. He's worth the cost. And so while discipleship starts with devotion to Christ, we see that that devotion is strengthened by other devotion that we see here in our passage. Notice they're devoted to the teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, the prayers. These are all definite articles before the noun to help you understand there's something quite specific about their devotion. It's not just devotion kind of loosey-goosey out in the open, but it's devotion to something very specific. It's not general, but there's an absolute sense to their devotion, to teaching, to the teaching. We recognize that there is a truth source. We understand that they're devoted to the apostles' teaching, not just any kind of teaching. Of course, the apostles were there to lay the foundation for the church. They're taking the instruction, the word that they heard from the Lord Jesus, that message, and now they're sharing that message, that doctrine, that body and core truths that they had heard from the Lord Jesus. Now they are dispensing those truths to those who have gathered on this day. The teaching. That was important. Also, the fellowship. This is the word *koinonia*.

This is the word for togetherness or community. It is expressed in their one heart, their one mind, their one man kind of connectedness. In this definite article, the fellowship, helps you understand that this is a group of individuals with a specific, specific community in mind.

[ 17 : 52 ] They're connected. It's a known body of believers. They're not just those who've gathered artificially, but they're beginning to understand their belongingness to one another, their

commitment to one another.

Then we see the breaking of bread. Well, what is this? Well, it's not just sharing a meal together, but it's sharing the meal. The meal. Of course, remembering Christ's death until he comes. The communion aspect, this remembering aspect, the meal that they shared to commemorate the work of Christ in drawing them together. And then the prayers. This was a group of individuals who understand their commitment to prayer. Be watchful in prayer, continuing in it with thanksgiving. That's Paul's advice to the church. And that should be the expression of those who have gathered as believers, is our commitment to one another in prayer. Not just individually, but especially corporately.

So discipleship begins with devotion to Christ, but it leads then to growing in Christ. It leads to growing in Christ. We see this throughout the passage, this commitment of God's people to one another.

They're not just loosely assembled, but they're bound inseparably to one another. This is the continuing work of the teaching that's taking place. We know that the word of God is living and active. We see that in Hebrews chapter 10. And Peter, in one of his epistles to the scattered church, will talk about the essential nature of the word of God. He says, we have been born again, he says, through the living and abiding word of God. A word that abides forever. You see, if the word of God is living and active, it's meant to impart spiritual life to those who receive it. So that your life is not characterized by being static, but it's characterized by being one of growth, one of movement, one of progress, moving in a certain direction. That's what the word of God will do for those who have embraced it. But you see, God, by his grace, has not just given apostles. God, by his grace, has also gifted the church with pastors and teachers for the sake of helping them grow in Christ. We find that in Ephesians chapter 4 verses 11 to 13. It says this, he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, that's a shepherd's word is the another word for pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith in the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

God has graciously given the church pastors and teachers for this specific role to help to equip them for ministry and to help them grow in knowledge and unity in faith, knowing what the word of God says, knowing how to apply that word to their life, knowing the body of truth that helps inform them about who Jesus is so they can grow in spiritual maturity and grow in togetherness with one another.

[ 21 : 27 ] God has given us the gift of spiritual leaders for the sake of helping us enjoy growth. And so it shows up in this community of believers. We see that here in verses 43 to 46. Notice, notice this active, growing, interactive community. It says, Do you see this community that's growing?

They're learning together. They're sharing together. They are worshiping together. They're celebrating together. And Paul gives us this similar picture in Ephesians chapter 4 verses 15 and 16.

This growing church. What happens when a church consolidates around the leaders that has been given and is learning and growing from those leaders? Here's the kind of growth you can expect. It says, Speaking the 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.

If you want and I want to grow in every way, that growth is dependent upon the teaching. The teaching that God has graciously given to us through his word, but also faithfully distributed through the spiritual leaders that he has blessed us with.

[ 23 : 23 ] I have been a beneficiary of godly, faithful teachers. And I trust that you have also been a beneficiary of godly, faithful teachers. And notice, if we want to grow up in this way, we need to join ourselves together in this process.

Notice it begins with love, speaking the truth in love. Notice where it ends. It ends when the body grows so that it builds itself up in love.

Love is the beginning and the end of this process. It helps to describe this church who is committed to discipleship, being together. And so God has called us all to something.

He's called us to this privilege and responsibility of helping one another grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

And so once we are growing in Christ, then it results in forming Christ in others. In forming Christ in others. I love how the apostle Paul puts this in Galatians chapter 4 verse 19.

[ 24 : 31 ] He says, my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you. That's the goal.

The goal of discipleship is not just to have a new body of information. Not just new teaching. Not just new facts and figures. Not just new arguments from the scripture.

The goal of teaching, the goal of discipleship is Christ. Is to form Christ in you. Now this is especially important. And I think it's been one of those things the Lord has been challenging me with a lot.

Because it's really easy to go through the routine. I've got a deliverable every single week. I have to preach. I need to teach. I need to come to the scriptures. I need to give you something to listen to from the word of God.

And hopefully it's instructive. Hopefully it's beneficial. Hopefully it's encouraging and supportive in some way. But if it ends there. If it ends with just you learning more information.

[ 25 : 34 ] And if it ends with me just delivering a message. Then the goal has not been accomplished. Because it's meant to form Christ in you.

It's meant to form Christ in me. And so if my teaching doesn't take me to Christ. If my teaching doesn't help me grow in Christ. If my teaching in the process of teaching doesn't make me depend on him.

And love him more. Then it is absolutely a waste of my time and your time. We are called by God's grace.

To actively be a part of the process of forming Christ in one another. That is the goal. That's the privilege. That's the joy. The joy is that. We see that not only in Galatians.

But especially in 2 Timothy 2 verse 2. Let me share this with you. It's unbelievable how this works. Listen. This is Paul talking to Timothy. He says. What you heard from me.

[ 26 : 36 ] In the presence of many witnesses. In trust to faithful men. Who will be able to teach others also. Do you realize in that one short verse.

There are four generations of believers. That the apostle Paul is referred to. He says. What you've heard from me. That's Paul. That's generation number one. From the presence of many witnesses. In trust to faithful men. That's you Timothy. You're the second generation. You entrust to faithful men. That's the third generation. And what will they do. Well they're going to carry it on to others. Four generations. That's discipleship. Discipleship is forming Christ in others. It's helping them love Christ. Not just know Christ. But to worship Christ.

And to grow in their relationship with Christ. So they can help form Christ in others as well. And so here at Maranatha. There are a number of ways we try to do that.

[ 27 : 33 ] And it's not the ultimate strategy. But it's one of the many things that we seek to do. We have a number of Bible studies that take place throughout the week. We have three women's studies that are happening.

I think two in the morning. And one in the evening. We have two men's studies that take place. One in the morning. And one in the evening. That's to help form Christ in you. Help introduce you to him. Help you develop your relationship with him. So you can know him more. Then we have something called connect groups. And really all a connect group is a place where you can go at 9 o'clock. From 9 to about 10.30. To not just to hear a lesson. But especially to interact over the scripture together. We have facilitators.

Young men. Older men. Who are helping to lead discussions around either certain topics. From the Bible. Or from the scripture itself. The goal is not only to encourage you.

[ 28 : 33 ] And to invite you into a spiritual conversation from the word. So that you grow. But so that you can stimulate growth in others. And through the process. The goal is that you would also be part.

Of helping to encourage these men. In the process of forming Christ in them too. Helping them grow in experience. Helping them to be equipped. Helping them to be encouraged.

And helping them to grow. So that they can rise as a teacher within our fellowship. We also have something called small groups.

Small groups are for a longer span of time. While connect groups usually happen from 6 to 12 weeks at a time. So there's a lot of on ramps and off ramps. You can form smaller community

fellowships with different people.

But small groups are designed kind of for the long haul. Normally a year at a time. And you're meeting with these groups. And you're studying the word together. You're fellowshiping with one another.

[ 29 : 35 ] Praying together. And forming deeper relationships with a group of individuals. Usually once or twice a month. These are just some of the ways that we have sought to help build the church.

Informing Christ in a love for him. So that's discipleship. Well what is fellowship? What is fellowship? This is where we're going to kind of draw our time to a close.

By talking about fellowship. And then we'll pick up evangelism next week. Fellowship expresses our oneness in Christ. Fellowship expresses our oneness in Christ.

Of course we're working in order now. Instead of bow, build, bless and belong. Instead of the evangelism component. I want you to see the significance of fellowship and unity.

That then leads to these other things. Fellowship expresses our oneness in Christ. And we see that in verses 44 to 47. And all who believed were together.

[ 30 : 36 ] And they had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings. And distributing their proceeds to all as any had need.

And day by day attending temple together. And breaking bread in their homes collectively. They collectively received their food collectively.

With glad and generous hearts. Praising God and having favor with all the people. Can you see the connectedness that's taking place in this body of believers?

Their unity is unmistakable. Shared belongings. Shared needs. Shared worship. Shared food. Shared hearts.

Shared praise with God. Or to God. And shared favor with all the people. They were all sharing. And Luke, the author of this book. Has gone to great lengths to emphasize their togetherness.

[ 31 : 39 ] Their unity. Their oneness. Their fellowship with one another. They were united. But this unity that they experienced was not a work of them.

Okay? It wasn't just that they decided. You know what? We need to be unified. So let's make sure that we do this better. No. Their unity is first enjoyed because of the unity that was created by God himself.

This is not a manufactured, man-made kind of unity. It's a God-appointed, God-built kind of unity. Romans 6, verse 5 describes it.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like him. That is a work of God.

He is the one through his death, through his resurrection, makes real unity possible for those who believe. It's not a unity that comes just to everybody.

[ 32 : 41 ] It's a unity that happens for those who make a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus, make him their Lord and Savior. He has joined believers together.

We enjoy oneness to Christ, and thus we enjoy oneness with one another. But fellowship is also the pathway to discipleship.

Now this is amazing, okay? Now maybe you've never thought about the significance of fellowship as it relates to discipleship. And I want to make a pretty strong statement here.

And I think you're going to see this being worked out in the scripture. You cannot fulfill the obligation or the command to disciple or to be part of discipleship without committing yourself to fellowship.

That's what I'm trying to demonstrate here. See, Christian fellowship is given to us with a goal in mind. It's not just about sharing a meal.

[ 33 : 44 ] It's not just about men meeting together to have steak, which I love the idea. I think that's a great idea, Jeff. Thank you for putting that together.

I'm looking forward to that. But it's not just about sharing a meal. It's fellowship with a goal in mind. There's training. There's teaching. There's growing that's happening here.

That's why we see this community. Yes, they are sharing a meal together. But notice, they're devoted to teaching. It's a group that's worshipping together.

And that's the essence of Christian fellowship. That's what we see in Hebrews chapter 10, verses 24 and 25. We see fellowship, but it's fellowship that is activated or carried by teaching.

Let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

[ 34 : 46 ] Fellowship, you notice, togetherness, but togetherness with a goal of stirring one another up to love and good deeds. It's the model that's set forth by our Lord Jesus.

In Mark chapter 3, verse 14, notice this. Speaking of Jesus, In order for the disciples, the apostles, to ever accomplish and fulfill the objective that Christ had for them, it required, first of all, fellowship with Christ.

Belonging to Christ. Hearing from Him. Learning from Him. Watching Him. Interacting with Him. Seeing how His heart for different people. Watching how God the Father was guiding His life and how the Spirit was activating and empowering His life.

If they were ever going to be witnesses of Christ's message to others, they needed to first fellowship with Christ Himself. And that's what God has called us to as well.

They needed to see Christ for themselves. And if we're ever going to be involved in discipleship, we must first commit ourselves to fellowship.

[ 36 : 15 ] I love how the Apostle Paul expresses this in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 8. He said, We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.

This affection that the Apostle Paul had to stimulate this church in learning, in growing, but doing it in community. Finally, fellowship is the channel of gospel witness.

It's the channel of gospel witness. It's not just the platform by which discipleship happens, but it's also the channel of gospel witness. Notice in verse 47 how this works.

They're praising God and having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to their number, day by day, those who are being saved. You see, what it produces, this fellowshiping community, actually confirms that what Christ has accomplished for them is real.

It helps to confirm that the gospel has power to overcome a lot of differences. This is a church that's gathered, lots of differences.

[ 37 : 32 ] Remember, 16 different countries, or 16 different languages that are spoken. They're all assembled in one place, different backgrounds, different ethnic categories, different genders, male and female.

They're all here together, and yet they're one. How is that possible? Well, it's possible because of the gospel, and it confirms the power of the gospel to change people, and it produces something. And so, we see the evidence of Christ's prayer in John chapter 17 coming through. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

Why? That they might be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Our oneness proves that the Father sent the Son to accomplish salvation through His death and resurrection.

[ 38 : 36 ] If you want to have an effective, fruitful, gospel testimony, it begins with demonstrating a commitment to the body. Fellowship and oneness in unity with the body.

And so, if we ever want to have a platform for effective discipleship in growing people in Christ, and if we ever want to have a platform for effective evangelism in leading people to Christ, it shows up in how you relate to the body of Christ.

Now, that should not be surprising. Our commitment to the body proves that the gospel is real. And so, if we're not united, at least two things will happen.

First, our own salvation is called into question. Not that, not that you're not saved. That's not, that's not what I'm saying, but, but, but that it, it raises the question that is the work that Christ has done for you, has it actually accomplished something?

Not just oneness to God, but oneness with the people that God has put me in fellowship with. And the second thing it does is that now our message loses its credibility. And that's the essence of Christ's prayer.

[ 39 : 53 ] If I'm not one with the people that God has put me together with, then my message of the gospel has no, has no effectiveness.

It has no evidence. There's no evidence to demonstrate that it actually has power to do anything. And so, fellowship, fellowship at Maranatha is something we want to grow.

We want to grow in. Particularly in our, in our serving teams. I think this is how we probably see fellowship happen very, very well here. Our, our, our serving teams that, that express their oneness through ministry to others.

We have a number of serving teams here at Maranatha. Greeting teams, nursery, children's ministry, Awana, youth groups, mowing teams, and snow removal teams, and media, and live stream, and, and the praise, the praise team, and probably many others that I'm, that I'm missing. But this is how we get to show that, that, that we belong together by serving one another in various ways. It's also a way of us fulfilling our, the one another commands that God has called us to.

[ 41 : 05 ] Do you realize there are over 50 times in the New Testament where God commands us to do things together? One another. Let me give you just a couple of examples. We're to love one another.

We're to show hospitality to one another. We're to serve one another. Greet one another. Fellowship with one another. Bear one another's burdens. Confess your sins to one another. Pray for one another.

Stir one another up to love and good deeds. Exhort one another. Encourage one another. Admonish one another. Submit to one another. Forgive one another. Be patient with one another. We're to be kind to one another.

We're to comfort one another. Greet one another. Agree with one another. Sing to one another. Care for one another. And the list goes on. The point should be very easy.

We cannot be faithful followers of Jesus without being together. We have to commit ourselves to the things that Christ values.

[ 42 : 08 ] What he prioritizes. And then when we do the beauty of it is that everything else falls into place. Then discipleship begins to happen. And evangelism begins to happen.

When we agree or prioritize the fellowshiping that fellowshiping aspect helps us to grow in ways that then unleashes those other priorities in our life and allows us to work them out in ways that are not just meaningful and effective but that are God-honoring, God-exalting.

God then gets glory. And that's what we want. We want God to receive the glory that he alone deserves. Oh, may God help us as we prioritize the things that God has called us to.

May you pray for us and then next week we're going to finish this up as we wrap up what is evangelism. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for what we learn from the scriptures. The priorities that you set. The instructions that you give. But most of all the Christ that's at the center of all of this. Lord, I pray that you would help us to grow in our love for Jesus.

[ 43 : 26 ] and in that growing in love with you then we'll see a greater attention given to worship and to fellowship and discipleship and evangelism.

And you will allow those things to be effective as we are finding strength and direction and power from you to do the things you've called us to. May you be glorified in and through us in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you. Thanks for coming. Good to see you. God bless you.