

1 **The Gospel and Community**

- An overemphasis on the personal dimensions of the Gospel tends to diminish the place of community
- The Gospel tends to be used merely as a way to a personal relationship with God (which is important)
- The Gospel not only restores our relationship with the Triune God (the original community), but also now the Gospel Community of Faith

2 **The Gospel and Community**

- It is clear from Scripture that a major effect of the Gospel is the building of a new community which lives out the Gospel
- This is certainly seen in the public gatherings of the church
- But this cannot be the only, or even primary place, in which it is lived out
- It must also be lived out in the mundane and ordinary places of our lives

3 **The Gospel and Community**

- The majority of the Bible, and especially the New Testament, is written with a view to the Church, not to individuals
- Of the 27 NT books, it appears that possibly 6 were written to individuals; 3 of those are to instruct in church leadership
- The large part of practical biblical instruction is focused on “one another” in relationships, not merely in public worship

4 **A Sampling of “One Another” Passages in the New Covenant**

- **John 13:34** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "
- The “newness” of this love is that it has Jesus Christ’s love for us as our model and example
- This includes being servants, humility, forgiving others’ sins, and sacrifice

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- **John 13:35** "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
- The “final apologetic” (Schaeffer) by which others know we are Jesus’ disciples is our love for one another.
- This assumes that those who are not Christians, even those who do not attend our church, will be able to see how we love one another.

6

- **John 15:12** "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
- **John 15:17** "These things I command you, that you love one another."
- Clearly, Jesus is emphasizing the place of love as a predominant part of obedience as His disciple

7 "One Another" in the NC Letters

- **Romans 12:5** "so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."
- Our being united to Jesus also unites us to one another as His body.
- **Romans 12:10** "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another"
- There is to be affection as members of the same family, and giving the preference to others

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- **Romans 12:16** "Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. "
- There is to be a unity of mind (that of Christ), which includes a purposeful association with those who are "humble", the disassociated, poor, outcast.

9

- **Romans 14:13** "Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way."
- Condemning others on matters that are a matter of biblical freedom, and a desire to use our freedoms in such a way so as to not make them stumble into sin.

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- **Romans 15:7** "Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."
- A Christ-like reception of fellow believers in their weaknesses, sins, failures, struggles, with a view to their growth and good for the glory of God.

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- **Romans 15:14** "Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."
- A commitment to help one another in holiness, not being indifferent to one another's personal spiritual growth.
- Including a willingness to lovingly speak the Word to them.

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- **Romans 16:16** "Greet one another with a holy kiss."
- An appropriate and pure display of affection and love for fellow believers

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- **1 Corinthians 6:7** "Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated?"
- A willingness to be wronged rather than to drag personal disputes before unbelievers.

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- **1 Corinthians 12:25** "that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another."
- A commitment to use your spiritual gift to care for fellow believers.
- **Galatians 5:15** "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!"
- Guarding against speaking and gossiping that is equivalent to "Christian Cannibalism."

15

- **Galatians 5:26** "Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."
- Fighting against pride that would lead to provoking and being envious of one another.
- **Galatians 6:2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
- Helping one another with particular and practical burdens in life.

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- **Ephesians 4:2** "with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love"
- In humility, treating one another gently, with patience, and even bearing the faults of others in the love that Christ shows on the cross.
- **Ephesians 4:25** "Therefore, putting away lying, "*Let* each one *of you* speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another."
- A commitment to speak truth and not lie.

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- **Ephesians 5:19** “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”
- Speaking and singing with praises to God into one another’s lives.

- **Ephesians 5:21** “submitting to one another in the fear of God.”
- A servant-submission to one another with an eye toward God.

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- **Colossians 3:13** “bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.”
- A Christ-like bearing of the sins of others, forgiving their sins.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:18** “Therefore comfort one another with these words....**5:11** Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”
- Seeking to comfort those who are afflicted with the Word of God.

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- **Hebrews 3:13** “but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”
- A frequent speaking to one another to help not be hardened in sin.

- **Hebrews 10:24** “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works”
- A focused attention on others to stir up love toward them

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- **James 5:9** “Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!”
- A refusal to grumble and complain about one another.

- **James 5:16** “Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”
- Mutual confession of sins and prayer.

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- **1 Peter 1:22** “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart”

- A love that is beyond nominal, but with fervency and sincerity.
- **1 Peter 3:8** “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous”
- Love out of minds ultimately unified in the Gospel, bearing the fruit of compassion, tenderheartedness, and courtesy.

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- **1 Peter 4:9** “Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.”
- Opening up our homes to one another, with gratitude to share what we have.
- **1 John 4:11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
- Loving with a willingness to die, seeing how God has loved us in Christ.

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Some Conclusions from the “one another” passages

- None of these are negotiable or optional, but as disciples of Jesus we are called to love Him by loving one another – even if more introverted
- Our deep sin, our past failures, and the realization of our future failures call us to look to Jesus Christ again as our atoning sacrifice for our forgiveness
- We can only find the power to do these things as we find our strength growing out of God’s love, commitment and sacrifice for us

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- Only a small portion of this can be done in the isolated, occasional and unusual context of the assembly as a church
- We are called to do this in one another’s lives, not just 1 ½ hours one day a week
- Everyone knows how to “play church”, and people expect us to do this one day a week
- But as we are involved with one another’s lives (which takes time, planning, effort, and other-directedness), we have an opportunity to display the new and living humanity shaped by the Gospel

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- While the New Testament has little to say about public worship, it has much to say about this relationship of “one another”
- When too much emphasis is put on the public assembly, faithfulness is equated to church attendance
- The danger is that we feel our religious duty is fulfilled if we come to church – meanwhile a primary purpose of this assembly is to instruct us how to live in this way

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- There is the danger of treating the church like a preaching center, a place to get one's "fix" on biblical data
- God doesn't want us to have a superficial and once a week relationship with one another, but that which enables us to live out all of these instructions
- A primary purpose of pastors, and of preaching, is to equip you for the work of servanthood to the body – Ephesians 4:12ff

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- The reality of our geographical dislocation presents a challenge
- My encouragement to you is to find those who are providentially closest to you (look at the directory), and seek to become more intimately involved in people's lives
- Don't look for those who are just at the same stage of life or interests – this is not what is to unify us
- Our unity is a Christ-like love for and living out of the Gospel

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- This is true not only of our relationship as fellow members of the body of Christ, but also within our homes and in our families