

## MISSION CARE: Our Motivation

# Koinonia & Caring for The Body

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## Summary

Scripture Text: **Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. *Romans 12:10-13***

Christ calls us to love one another; we're made to live together in fellowship – to help one another, to bear each other's burdens and to encourage those around us to keep going. When we have a “deep concern” for others, we will have a tremendously “giving and caring” spirit that will lead to our fulfilling the kinds of things spelled out in our first passage.

## Devoted to One Another In Christ

As God's children, we are also brothers and sisters. Within the Church, we now have opportunity to not only draw closer to one another but to also take the time to develop deeper committed relationships with one another. We are to be devoted to one another while sharing our Grace and Growth in Christ. See: Acts 2:42-44

### In the Love of Christ we must 1st Care...

- a. Care enough to get involved
- b. Care enough to take the time
- c. Care enough to honor, reprove, and pray for one another
- d. Care enough to “speak into” each others' lives with biblical truth and spiritual encouragement

God's salvation touches us on an individual level, God's work within us (sanctification) happens in a “group setting” we call the Church. Indeed....

*It is in communion with one another in the Body of Christ, that we experience the spiritual journey back home to a loving God who created, redeems and sustains us. Simply put, God has given us one another for the journey; sister and brothers who are to encourage and spur one another along the way.*

**Question:** How do we best tap into God’s gift of family as we journey together, so that we will spiritually encourage one another? (In other words: How do we best “construct” the koinonia we’re given by the Spirit?).

## One-on-One Opportunities

Whether we call such koinonia opportunities “discipleship”, or community connections, we can be supported and encouraged along our Christian walk when we develop deep and trusting relationships with other Christians.

While Christian maturity and knowledge are a blessing when found in such “christian friendships”, with the support of biblical sermons and ministry opportunities in the broader church family, any two Christians who trust one another can provide godly spiritual encouragement to one another if they do two basic things:

- a. If they practice koinonia with God, and
- b. If they define their relationship with commitment and responsibility.

This is why. When a person spends intimate time with God; open to God’s Word and Spirit, then God will give them something to share that will spur their friend’s spiritual growth.

When we have koinonia with God He will give us something to share with others. And when we’re committed in one-on-one spiritual relationships, we will take the time to regularly meet or talk or text, we will keep one another focused on being God’s children; as we face worldly temptation to forget who we are. And through a sense of responsibility for another person’s spiritual walk our one-on-one relationships will include speaking spiritual truth in love, being open and accountable for our own thoughts, words and deeds, and praying for each other as we journey together by means of a one-on-one relationship.

**Question:** Do you have such a relationship; a committed, responsible God-focused relationship that draws you nearer to God? God designed you to have such a relationship where “iron sharpens iron” (Proverbs 27:17) and where you are mutually encouraged by one another’s faith (Romans 1:12). In Genesis when God said of Adam, “It

is not good for the man to be alone.” (Genesis 2:18), this is a truth not at all limited to a marriage relationship. It is true for all people in all kinds of situations.

Don't be afraid to initiate such friendships where God's Spirit will tie you together and support your Christian journey. This is the most basic and simplest way we can construct koinonia and receive God's blessing of rich fellowship.

But, as a church body we can also journey together through group opportunities designed to support the same spiritual goals.

## Group Opportunities

The biggest issues today for group koinonia are twofold; coordinating schedules, and establishing trust in a group.

Sometimes jobs, kids and education define our schedules so tightly, it's nearly impossible to get 3, 4, 5 even 6 people together at a common time and place. Even when it happens, how quickly we're tempted by "better options" or we encounter "life surprises" that threaten such groups? I see this even among myself and other leaders who've committed to regular fellowship, and who know the blessing that God gives to such groups!

But, convinced that we can usually find time to do what we really want to do, I tend to see the problem less as "scheduling" and more in terms of beliefs & priorities. We need to be honest with ourselves:

### Question:

- a. Do I have a desire to grow in the Lord, both in personal character and in ministry to one another? If so... then I'll make the time.
- b. Do I trust that God will work through me to transform other's lives?
- c. Do I have things in my life God wants to change with the help of others? Do I want to change? If so, then I'll prioritize time for those meetings
- d. Do I realize that I don't have all the answers, and that I need others to help me progress in my Christian walk? If so, then I will not settle for "token" Christianity, but give myself to relationships that further my walk.

Currently we have Sunday morning, Wednesday night, and Thursday Bible Studies as well as Wednesday Prayer Line and ministry opportunities throughout the week. Maybe some of these opportunities fit your schedule & priorities.

We can easily develop a topical Bible-based small group on Sundays or a weekday, if you have a specific need to address. Maybe you're baffled about money management, marriage, raising children, surviving teenagers, empty-nesting, helping aging parents. There are tons of resources that can help us biblically address such needs, but what is most important is recognizing that as Christians commit, trust one another and open up our lives to one another, God's Spirit will speak through them, and God will offer guidance within such small groups.

Do you believe that together we grow, and together we transform the world? If so, then maybe you're ready to prioritize...

## Conclusion

That which happened in the early church; the power of Spirit-led koinonia, happens today when followers of Christ allow His Spirit to guide and transform their relationships with each other and the world. Together we grow, together we help one another to draw near to God, and together we change the world.

Commit yourself to deeply caring for one another, as you trust in the koinonia that only God provides.



# Caring For One Another Like Christ

## Discipleship

Jesus called us to do many things, all of them important, but discipleship is one that stands out above the rest. Why? Because without replicating and reproducing what God has done in you, His reach is limited to your time, your network, and your life.

The goal in Discipleship is Growth. Just as a baby needs the proper care of adults to have a healthy upbringing, it is necessary for the mature in Christ to bring others up in Christ with the proper care. The young in Christ

*Biblical discipleship is the act of one person intentionally impacting the life of some other person in the direction of Christlikeness (2 Timothy 2:2)*

Biblical discipleship is...

1. **Intentional:** Discipleship is not simply someone learning about Christ. It is not accidental. It is intentional. It is not a function of the learning of the learner but of the teaching of the teacher. Someone must intend to do it
2. **Impacting:** Discipleship has not happened simply because a student is excited about or impressed by a teacher. Discipleship happens when there is a change in virtues, values, beliefs, and lifestyle.
3. **Personal:** Discipleship is not covering material. Neither is it being part of a group (a class, congregation, family, etc.). Discipleship is one person dealing with another person personally.
4. **Christlike:** Discipleship is not just a mentee modeling a mentor. The modeling must be moving in the direction of Christlikeness.

## 9 Principles of Christlike Discipleship

1. Biblical discipleship is **incarnational** or “In the flesh”
  - In person, face-to-face
  - Association- spending time with them
  - Building a foundation to the relationship leads to trustScripture: John 1:14, 1 John 1:1, 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

2. Biblical discipleship is **reproductive**
  - Multiplication (as they grow, they should find a person to disciple)
  - Quality, NOT quantity (numbers are not as important as true growth)Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20, 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8
3. Biblical discipleship **invites personal discovery**
  - No “canned” answers
  - Asking questions sets them up to discover truth for themselvesScripture: John 2:19, John 3:7, John 4:10, John 6:53
4. Biblical discipleship **reasons, persuades, and gives evidence**
  - The disciple-maker gives supporting evidence after personal discovery beginsScripture: Isaiah 1:18, Acts 18:4, Acts 17:24
5. Biblical discipleship **counts the cost**
  - Count the cost concerning others
  - Count the cost concerning ourselvesScripture: Luke 14:26-28, Malachi 2:1-4, Matthew 10:39
6. Biblical discipleship is **impacting** (giving)
  - Extravagance, NOT stinginess
  - Sharing what God has given (resources, wisdom, knowledge, gifts, experiences)
  - Expect nothing in returnScripture: Luke 6:38-40, John 5: 13, John 3:16, Ephesians 5:25
7. Biblical discipleship is **demonstration**
  - Showing them how to live a Godly life (prayer, reading the Word, sharing the Gospel, obedience)Scripture: Luke 11:1-4, 2 Timothy 2:15, Ephesians 4:12-13, 2 John 1:6
8. Biblical discipleship means **challenging** the disciple
  - to use their gifts for God’s kingdom
  - to find another to disciple
  - to spread the Good News
  - to find people to do life withScripture: 1 Peter 4:10, Romans 10:14-15, Hebrews 10:25
9. Biblical discipleship has an **eternal perspective**
  - Pointing people toward God
  - Doing what God is doing
  - Seeking God’s will
  - Judging only with God’s judgmentScripture: 1 Corinthians 11:1, John 5:19, John 5:20, John 5:30

Training material adapted from: DeWitt, Dr. David A. “Seven Principles of Biblical Discipleship.” Relational Concepts, Inc.

# Caring For At-Risk Members

## Strengthening Christ's Body

### True Love Instructs, Corrects, And Warns

#### Admonishing One Another In Christ

Though only used eight times in the New Testament—all by Paul (7x in his Epistles; 1x in Acts)—the word “admonish” (*noutheteō*) lays a special charge on believers. While only commanded as “admonish one another” in two places (Romans 15:14 and Colossians 3:16), the command is implied in all its uses, with especial consideration for leaders. To get a sense of its meaning consider these eight verses. The word *noutheteō* is bolded in each instance.

*“Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.” (Acts 20:31)*

*“I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.” (Romans 15:14)*

*“I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children.” (1 Corinthians 4:14)*

*“Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.” (Colossians 1:28–29)*

*‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God’ (Colossians 3:16)*

*“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the*

*fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12–14)*

Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. (2 Thessalonians 3:15)

## Building One Another Up in The Admonition of The Lord

- *Admonition requires endurance and emotion.*

As Paul says he admonished with tears the Ephesians every day for three years (Acts 20:31). Admonishment is not merely information transfer; it requires the soul of the “teacher” to plead for the souls of others. It takes time and takes a toll on the “admonisher,” hence it is often the work of the spiritually mature.

- *Admonition depends on a genuine knowledge of God’s Word.*

Admonition cannot simply mean “telling someone like it is” or saying hard things. Lots of people speak strongly with no attention to God’s Word, no design encourage or strengthen faith. Genuine admonition comes from wisdom found only in God’s Word (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16), and is aimed at improving the spiritual condition of the hearer, or at least protecting them from their folly.

- *Admonishing goes beyond teaching.*

Twice in Colossians (1:28; 3:16) Paul couples “admonishing” with “teaching” (*didask* ). In these instances, the primary stress is not on teaching but imploring the hearers to do what the teaching instructs. In this way, admonishment pleads in earnest for the hearer to obey the teaching. As Jesus said in Matthew 28:19, disciples must be more than taught, they must be taught to obey. Teaching alone won’t produce obedience; admonition is necessary.

- *Admonition is personal.*

While it’s possible, in theory, to admonish a stranger, these eight examples display Paul admonishing those whom he knows well. Again, he spent three years with the Ephesians, 18 months with the Corinthians whom he calls “beloved children” (1 Cor 4:14), and he calls for the Thessalonians to respect those who “labor *among them* . . . and admonish

them”—hence implying that the ones who do the most admonishing (local pastors) know well the people whom they instruct and warn. Additionally, the context for admonishing is to be in the local church, among disciples seeking to obey God’s commands.

This is an important caveat: to the lost world incapable of holy love, admonition will only sound harsh and irritating. Therefore, while we do not shy away from speaking truth publicly, we must make distinction. To those without eyes, we don’t demand sight. But to those who see, we charge to walk well.

- *Admonition is aimed at worship.*

In Colossians 3:16, the goal of admonition is to sing “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” In other words, admonition doesn’t aim at ethics alone, but Spirit-filled exultation in the Lord. This doxological end comes through teaching and admonition that pours out of a heart filled with the word of God. In this way, admonition presses the hearer to consider the Word of God and to express his thankfulness in praise to God.

- *The church is a body of admonishers.*

While pastors lead in admonishing one another; they are not alone. Romans 15:14 expresses Paul’s confidence in all the Christians in Rome. Because they were filled with goodness and spiritual knowledge, he commands them to admonish one another. In truth, this might not be a universal command to immature and fickle Christians, but only to those who *are* filled with goodness and the spiritual wisdom. But to those who have the word of God dwelling richly within them, admonition is a normal and necessary part of church life.



# Caring for One Another In Christ

## Visitation

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### Visitation is a duty with Great Blessings

Chief among the reasons why visitation is important is that people matter to both God and to you. Visiting them lets them know you care. As members of the body of Christ, we are to watch one after another.

See Matthew 25:31 - 46 (note verses 36, 39, 40, 43 and 45)

See James 1:27

The biblical reality, when you look at the one another passages of Scripture, is that visitation is a corporate effort not just the Leadership or committee's job. If we are truly going to express care for one another, then we must often go where the people are. We must lay aside our busy schedules and excuses and make people a priority if we want to be followers of Christ.

### Who Needs to Be Visited

Anyone needing encouragement, comfort, or a sense of belonging would profit from a visit. While that could include everyone, there are certain individuals who especially need to be reminded that they aren't forgotten. These are people who can feel rather lonely at times.

- elderly people still living independently especially if they are shut-ins
- elderly or disabled people living in nursing homes
- people who are sick for a prolonged period of time
- people who are hospitalized
- bereaved people
- prisoners
- people in crisis

## What Should Happen in a Typical Visit:

Fear of not knowing what to say or do is one of the big stumbling blocks to going out on visitation. You don't have to have a planned speech to visit someone. Just being there matters more to them than what you do or say. Your presence communicates that you care and that is the bottom line in visiting someone in need.

### Here are some Tips:

1. Spend most of your time listening
2. Be sensitive with what you do say (i.e., the kind of stories you tell of people in similar situations).
3. Remember that you are there for them and not for yourself so be respectful.
4. If possible, Extend the gift of touch/ closeness
5. Offer to pray with or for them.
6. Leave something with them as a reminder of your visit like a card, a flower, a balloon, a picture, music, a book, last week's bulletin, food, or any small token.
7. Be respectful of time

To be sure, visitation will come easier for some people than others. While we all should be visiting one another on occasion, especially in time of need, people with a more outgoing personality or with the gifts of hospitality, exhortation, and/or mercy will be more prone to make visitation a part of their regular ministry.

Visiting is a viable ministry for people with this kind of gifting and/or personality, especially if their heart reaches out to people who are hurting, lonely, or in need.

