



In Acts 2:37-47, we are introduced to the Greek term KOINONIA which Luke used to help describe the earliest of communities of faith we now call churches. Intrinsic to this term is an understanding of being mutually obligated to one another. In short, the members of the Christian communities were to be connected to God and each other, they were to grow closer to God and each other, and they were to serve God and one another. The passage describes how the communities grew in number as the KERYGMA, or Gospel message, was expressed in word and deed. This tells us we are to be connecting others with God and to the faith community – helping those outside the faith family to also grow and serve.

Jesus connected with God/others and connected those he came in contact with to God and one another. Scripture tells us as a boy, Jesus grew in wisdom and he helped grow others through teaching, modeling ministry, and ultimately making a relationship possible with God. Jesus did all of this through love which is the connective tissue of faith families.

There are many ways in which we connect with God and one another, grow and serve – and connect individuals who are outside of our family of faith with God and other believers. The Greatest Commandments (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) are about CONNECTIONS in Christ through love – GROWING and SERVING. If you have ever asked the question, ‘what am I supposed to be doing as a member of First Baptist Church?’ my prayer is you will remember the three terms CONNECT, GROW and SERVE.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS CONCERNING THEME...

Our baptism is not an ending, but a beginning – a launching point for growth in our connections with God and one another. Once we have made our initial CONNECTION with God through Christ, it is part of our purpose to GROW and SERVE in this life of faith. We are to grow with God and others. We are to serve God and one another. If we are not growing and serving in our connection with God and one another, then something is seriously amiss. We CONNECT and GROW and SERVE. Connection without growth and service is a little like James describes faith without works – IT IS DEAD! Connection, Growth and Service are essential in the life of a believer. Acts 2:37-47 explains how the community was devoted to the Apostle’s teachings (the Kerygma or Gospel message). They were faithful to worship and prayer and bringing others into the family. They connected, grew, and served and, therefore, the community connected, grew, and served. What is ironic is that one way we grow and serve is by continuing to connect with God and one another – and connecting those outside of faith with God and the family of God! As we proceed, we will see our SERVICE helps us GROW and CONNECT. Contextually, the terms can stand alone, but I pray you will see how they are intertwined regarding our purpose as a local church.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON SERVE

If the church is not on mission to serve, then it ceases to be the church. We give ourselves away in service to God, one another, and the world. As aforementioned from the book of James – faith without works is dead. A true connection with God is innately tied to a commitment to SERVE. The One in which we are following proclaimed, “I have not come to be served, but to serve.” If we are to be disciples of Jesus, one of our first priorities is to try and serve like he did. How do we serve in our local family of faith? Christianity is not a Lone Ranger activity. It is not a spectator sport. FBC is a missional church and NOT a consumer church. We should NOT come to church in order to be entertained. I hope when you are participating in worship and experiencing God here at FBC, you feel led to do something great for the Kingdom of God. Serving should be a natural outflow of connecting and growing with our church. We should have opportunities for service readily available for individuals joining our fellowship. Serving can be expressed in behind-the-scenes things (getting coffee ready for your Sunday school class, making sure an empty paper towel roll is filled in the restroom, making sure a visitor feels welcome and showing them around, writing a card to a sick church member). Service can also look like preaching, teaching, singing, receptionist for our clinic our clothes closet, being a greeter on Sunday mornings. We serve the church through our stewardship of our finances, gifts, and time. We follow Jesus most closely when we serve one another.

I hope you will join us this year at First Baptist Church as we work together to CONNECT, GROW, AND SERVE God and His Kingdom!

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