

RELATIONSHIPS

Greetings Saints:

Today I want to talk about "Relationships." not biological or even secular, but those God would have us build with one another as members of the Body of Christ. We have a lot religion today but far too little relationship.

Religion is the practice of a belief system. You can make anything you believe in a religion. In contrast, "Relationship" speaks of (1) connection --whether by birth, marriage or function, (2) association-- in common purpose, friendship or companionship and (3) involvement --interaction between two or more parties.

In neither of these three areas do we find the word location. Yet many feel that by being in the same location as others, the qualification for relationship has been met. Not So. The greatest evidence is our Sunday morning services. The majorities have the same belief system, religious assent and all are in the same location but little interaction with one another exists outside the prescribed format of the service.

Jesus called us to be his disciples--followers of him. Discipleship implies relationship or else there will be no fellowship. In relationship we come to know one another up close. When you're up close you see the scars as well as the beauty marks. You see the uglies as well as the pleasants. Yet, in a proper relationship the scars and uglies don't detract from our association and involvement, nor do the beauty marks add to it.

The first relationship Christ calls us to is with Himself. He says, "take my yoke upon you and learn of me..." (Mt. 11:29) Yoke speaks of salvation and relationship. Learning of him speaks of intimacy, communion and fellowship. It's more than just being in the written Word.

This relationship comes about through salvation, prayer, study of the Word, fellowship and worship with Him and others believers. By hearing and doing the Word of God.

But how do we come into relationship with other Believers? I believe the Word of God gives us several keys. (1) Love One Another--Jn. 13:35

It is by our love that all men will know that we are his disciples. The amplified bible reads, "if you keep on showing love among yourselves."

(2) Confess Your Faults to and Pray One For Another.-- Jm. 5:16
Confession to and prayer for one another builds relationship as we become transparent one with the other and begin to bear one another's burdens.

(3) Judge Not & Forgive--Lk 6:37
The bible warns us against judging, lest we be judged and we're also admonished to forgive if we want our heavenly father to forgive us. As we do with toward one another, they are more apt to do it toward us, thus building relationship.

(4) Be Sincere Rom. 12:9
Sincerity is on of the greatest things missing today between people of all

walks of life. Along with being sincere, we are to hate what is evil and hold fast to that which is good. Next God tells us...

(5) Rejoice With Those Who Rejoice...Rom. 12:15

How many times have you begrudged the blessings of others? Not only are we to share the joy of others, we are to weep when they weep. And finally,

(6) Live In Harmony With One Another....Rom. 12:16

Don't be haughty, high-minded, exclusive, but readily adjust yourself to people and things and give yourselves to humble tasks. Never over estimate yourselves.

There are churches of hurting people all around us. And all but a precious few put on their Sunday faces when around other believers. They come into the service hurting and they leave the same way--still hurting. It's like going to a hospital with all the right equipment, and a trained willing staff, and all you do is look around and smile and go home the same as when you came. The staff is trained and qualified, the equipment has been tested and certified but the sick and wounded deny any need of attention.

Relationship is not built on Sunday mornings, but they're built Monday through Saturday, and after Church on Sundays. This year, God is calling us not to religion but to relationship. We have a lot of catching up to do, so let's get busy.

Grow in Grace,

His Servant,

Jean Jackson.