

EXCELLENT COMMUNITY



**30
AUGUST
2020**

ED.LXXXI.08.2020

Bethany International Church
THE HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS

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Foreword

Community of Love. Cell group. Small group. Family Altar. There are a lot of names to call a small group of people who decided to grow together in their Christian life. The Bible says in Romans 12:5, "In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." We are not called to live a solitude life and distancing ourselves from other people. Rick Warren in his book 'The Purpose Driven Life' said that our relationship with God is personal but God never intended it to be private. We are created for a fellowship and a family.

Some might think that COOL is a platform to showcase our holy life and all of the members compete to win who is the most holy or have a perfect life. In reality, COOL is a safe home to confess our weaknesses, sins and failures. We can be just the way we are without being afraid of being judged or mocked. At the end of the day we are all broken and sinful people who need Christ to save our life.

John Piper once said that sanctification is a community project. A cell group (COOL – Community of Love) is a classroom to learn how to love and care for one another. A place to practice unselfishness and grace. In the process to be Christ-like, we support, encourage and edify one another because it is a long and difficult journey. More than fifty times, the New Testament used the phrase one another or each other; such as love each other, pray to one another, forgive each other, bear each other burdens and these cannot be done

if we live like a hermit who isolate themselves from other people. We often assume we have lived a holy life while our character is indeed untested.

Encouragement:

Commitment

Community requires commitment. We will not get any benefit in a community if we are a passive spectator. The Bible says in Acts 2:42, "They committed themselves to the teaching of apostles, the life together, the common meal, and the prayers." It is not an attitude of 'as long as I want or can' but we dedicate ourselves despite good or bad times. Attend all weekly gatherings and be on time. Get to know one another and contribute your thoughts when possible.

Have fun!

Though COOL is delivered through Bible teaching, the essence of COOL is also a fellowship. We ought to enjoy each other's company and share life together. We might share restaurant recommendations or go on a road trip. Sharing the good news of a new baby or a marriage proposal. Discuss current affairs or sports. It's a place where we can shed tears of grief and joy.

So, have you joined our COOL yet? If not, please join us. If you are so blessed with your COOL, ask many other people who have not joined to be in your COOL.

HELLO *new comers!*

Welcome to Bethany International Church Melbourne.
So glad that you are here with us. We want to help make your
first experience at BIC Melbourne a great one!



GET CONNECTED

Christian journey shouldn't be alone because it is a community project. Join our Community of Love (COOL) every Friday 7PM!

LET US CONTACT YOU



Lastly, please enjoy a cup of coffee on us! 

▶▶▶ COOL LIST ◀◀◀

MAIN

Canaan
Ephratah
Berea - Bethesda
Bethlehem
Jordan
Horeb
Bethany
Bethel
Cana
Philadelphia - Pniel
Moriah
Ephraim
Ekklesia
Emmaus
Galilee
Gennesaret
Gilgal - Carmel
Hebron - Philippi
Zion
Eden

Kezia, Freddie
Steven, Henry
Romy
Felix, Fransisca
Sony, Wilfred
Ferry, Febria
Paulus, Erina
Christy, Elvina
Bobby
Dwi, Vero
Elve, Calista
Kevin L, Sonia
Edo, Ica
Fabian, Priska
Kevin Y, Corine
Reinetta, Albert
Erika, Mike
Yoseph, Rian
Monica, Raymond
Jennifer

FAMILY

Antioch
Tiberias
Doncaster
Jerusalem
Mt Hermon
Phillipi
Shekinah
Tabernacle
Westal

Andy, Iwan
Andre, Albert
Michael, Rudy
Edwin, Gerda
Lily, Unggul
Hariyanto, Ivan
Alice
Sandi
Michael

180

Macedonia
Shiloh

Eric, Alicia
Daniel, Clarissa

NEXT GEN

Judea
Judah
Israel
Jeremiah
Heaven

Valentina, Sylvio
Aldo, Kezia M.
Catherine, Jerry
Sinta, Kevin W.
Pauline



Remain in Him and be fruitful

BY VALERIE SETIONO

One purpose of living in a community is to attract outsiders. It is his command to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19) and to reach out to the loss. Often, we get too comfortable in our inner circle that the thought of engaging with outsiders sounds irrelevant. In order to do this, we should first reconsider what the purpose of living in a community is, then we will realise how we are called to be fruitful. As in the book of Acts, Christians in the early church were liked by their surroundings. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be a Christian community that becomes a blessing, not only inside but also outside our “safe zone”?

The purpose of community

“Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Colossians 2: 12-14).

Our relationship with others belongs to God for his purpose. It does not exist for the sole purpose of our happiness. From this passage, we can learn three important things about our community. First, it shows our need for a community. We are not wired to live as independent, self-focused beings. We should know and understand that our walks with God are community projects and that it is an irreplaceable tool in his redemptive hands.

Second, this passage defines our identity, that we are “God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved” (v. 12). And the characters listed by Paul are all traits of Christ. Knowing that we are chosen, we have to put on Christ, be like Christ, make Christ our identity in the right here, right now work of God. We are called to be an ambassador of Christ, the Saviour King. The job of an ambassador is to represent the King, which means Jesus makes His invisible presence visible through us, who represents Him in one another's lives. And this is our mission in our community – and every relationship in our life – to make the grace of the invisible King visible.

Third, it is our calling to have a heart that loves others, to be aware of what others' need in this particular moment in their life. It's not an easy task, but that is why He who sent us also comes with us so that His grace is apparent in us to represent Him well.

The purpose of a fruitful community

Now that we have a purpose of living in a community, which is to grow together in love and to represent Christ through what we do, how should we maintain our community and make sure it is fruitful?

For our community to be fruitful, we have first to be fruitful ourselves, which is by abiding in Christ. In John 15:1-2, Jesus said that the Father tends the vine – which is Jesus, and the branches by taking away fruitless branches and pruning fruitful branches. He cuts away the lifeless and

cultivates the living. In verse 3, he then said to his disciples that *“you are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”* Since we are also his disciples, this should also apply to us, because we, too, are already cleansed by His blood, brought from death to life (**John 5:24**), and this is the nature of our union with Him. So, our obedience to abide in Him is simply to become what we are created and chosen to be. We are **already clean** because we believe in His Word, the whole message of Jesus, the gospel, and this is what brings us to a relationship with Him. Therefore, when we accept and are ready to be washed and pruned, it is a sign that we are **already** washed and pruned to be more fruitful.

Now that we know that we are already clean, in the next verse (**John 15:4**), Jesus gives this command to remain (abide) in Him, for us as His disciples, who are the true branches, who are in the vine. How can we remain in Him? In verse 7, he said, *“if you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”*. Our God is so gracious that we can just pray to Him and ask so that we can abide in Him, ask Him for us to bear fruit. He is the one who chose us and appointed us to go and bear fruit, and He is the one who enables us to do so (v. 16). And this is not for our own good, but for God’s glory that we bear much fruit (v.8) – which is the sign of being true disciples.

So why should we abide in Christ? In **John 15:11**, He said, *“I have told you this so that my joy may*

be in you, and that your joy may be complete.” It’s for us to have joy! In other words, it’s for His joy to be our joy. It means that the reason our joy can now be complete is that we are now in union with Christ (the branches in the vine), so we no longer enjoy merely with our own joy, but we enjoy the same thing that He enjoys with His joy.

Not only that, in verse 9-10, He also wants us to remain in His love. It means the same thing, which is to keep on loving with the love of Christ. So, now that we abide in Him, we will also have the love of Christ. Who to love? It’s His command, in verse 12, to *“love each other as I have loved you.”* And His love is so much greater than any love we ever encounter in this world. In Christ, love means *“to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”* (v. 13), and we are friends of God (v. 14-15)! We have to realise that it’s not our own good works or effort that makes us clean, but it is by His sacrifice on the cross, which shows how great His love is for us. Now, knowing that we have a Friend who is willing to give his life for us and that we are loved that much, even when we don’t deserve it, why don’t we also show love to others?

The obstacles

Loving others with the love of Christ is not easy. There are a lot of unlovable people around us that we would rather choose not to care for. But again, we can ask God for help. He is not God who just gave us a command and left us to do it on our own. No. He will enable us to love

because love comes from God (1 John 4:7). This passage is self-explanatory: *“This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”* (1 John 4:9-12) and *“we love because he first loved us”* (1 John 4:19). So, in order to love others, remember how loved you are!

Besides that, when we show love to others, there’s also a chance to be rejected. However, we shouldn’t be surprised! Even Jesus was persecuted, and in John 15, He has “warned” us that *“if they persecuted me, they will persecute you also”* (v.20), and *“they will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know*

the one who sent me” (v. 21). He said “will” not “may” or “probably”, so persecution, rejection, and disapproval are unavoidable.

Sometimes even we should be more surprised if they receive us well and accept the teaching, because that is truly a miracle! We forgot that it is indeed the work of the Holy Spirit that they can believe, and it is truly only by grace they are saved (John 15:26-27). So, don’t be discouraged, *“if you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you”* (1 Peter 4:14).

Finally, as we have received so much love from God through our community of love (COOL), let’s make this our mission to abide in Him and let Him work in us to show the love of Christ to others, and may the name of our Saviour King be glorified.



WEEKLY DEVOTION

30 AUGUST

1 Tesalonika 1-5

Ayat Renungan:
1 Tesalonika 5:16-18

“Bersukacitalah senantiasanya. Tetaplah berdoa. Mengucapkan syukurlah dalam segala hal, sebab itulah yang dikehendaki Allah di dalam Kristus Yesus bagi kamu.”

31 AUGUST

2 Tesalonika 1-3

Ayat Renungan:
2 Tesalonika 3:3

“Tetapi Tuhan adalah setia. Ia akan menguatkan hatimu dan memelihara kamu terhadap yang jahat.”

01 SEPTEMBER

Nehemia 1-4

Ayat Renungan:
Nehemia 1:5

“katakau: “Ya, TUHAN, Allah semesta langit, Allah yang maha besar dan dahsyat, yang berpegang pada perjanjian dan kasih setia-Nya terhadap orang yang kasih kepada-Nya dan tetap mengikuti perintah-perintah-Nya”

02 SEPTEMBER

Nehemia 5-7

Ayat Renungan:
Nehemia 1:9

“Tetapi, bila kamu berbalik kepada-Ku dan tetap mengikuti perintah-perintah-Ku serta melakukannya, maka sekalipun orang-orang buanganmu ada di ujung langit, akan Kukumpulkan mereka kembali dan Kubawa ke tempat yang telah Kupilih untuk membuat nama-Ku diam di sana.”

03 SEPTEMBER

Nehemia 8-10

Ayat Renungan:
Nehemia 8:10

“Lalu Nehemia, yakni kepala daerah itu, dan imam Ezra, ahli kitab itu, dan orang-orang Lewi yang mengajar orang-orang itu, berkata kepada mereka semuanya: “Hari ini adalah kudus bagi TUHAN Allahmu. Jangan kamu berdukacita dan menangis!”, karena semua orang itu menangis ketika mendengar kalimat-kalimat Taurat itu.

04 SEPTEMBER

Nehemia 11-13

Ayat Renungan:
2 Timotius 3:16

“Segala tulisan yang diilhamkan Allah memang bermanfaat untuk mengajar, untuk menyatakan kesalahan, untuk memperbaiki kelakuan dan untuk mendidik orang dalam kebenaran.”

05 SEPTEMBER

1 Timotius 1-3

Ayat Renungan:
1 Timotius 6:6-8

“Memang ibadah itu kalau disertai rasa cukup, memberi keuntungan besar. Sebab kita tidak membawa sesuatu apa ke dalam dunia dan kita pun tidak dapat membawa apa-apa ke luar. Asal ada makanan dan pakaian, cukuplah.”

“your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path”

psalm 119:105

Serving one another by God's grace

STORY RIBKA KUSNADI



In the midst of this pandemic and self-isolation, people are becoming more and more desperate for social interactions. The importance of having a community suddenly intensified. Why is that the case? One of the underlying reasons for being in a community is because we seek something out of it. We need our community, for example, to fulfil our social needs, to define who we are, to increase our social status, or to give us new business opportunities, etc. But what about Christian community?

Are we any different than the rest of the communities in this world?

Christian community, first and foremost, *should reflect Christ* himself so people can see the person of Jesus and believe in Him. And what did Christ do?

Philippians 2:3-8

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Jesus Himself came to this world as a **servant**. He left His glorious throne, His immeasurable riches and His loving Father to become human. Even after such a downgrade from a divine being into a mortal man, He was still willing to take the lowest position in human form, being born in a poor family instead of a royal prince in a palace. Looking from the example that Jesus gave us, it is only reasonable if we follow His example in serving one another with humility. The heart of Christian servanthood is Christ’s love and humility.

Now Christian servanthood is not only about ministering at church, but a lot more about the way we live. Our human nature is wired with survival instinct, which makes us put our own interest above others by default. We tend to do things in a certain way that maximise our happiness or minimise our suffering. To serve others means to strive

to maximise other people’s happiness or minimise their suffering, even though it may be at the expense of our happiness and suffering. But how is that even possible? The only reason for us to have that capacity to serve others is when we realise that our most important need has been satisfied. The biggest twist however, is that our ultimate need is not something that this world can give nor is something that we can ever earn.

Matthew 16:26

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”

In other words, the greatest need of any humankind is the salvation of our souls; which have been bought by the blood of Jesus, fully paid on the cross at such unspeakable price.

Only by realising that our greatest need has been met fully by Jesus can we be a people characterised with generous giving and servanthood. Jesus initiated and began the good work within us, we only move in response to what He has done for us.

But even though we already know these things, to go against our flesh is not something that we can do easily. There are some challenges we will encounter in our journey of Christian servanthood which we better be aware of.

1. Willingness without action

Some of us may have the heart to serve others and to glorify God through our way of living, but when it comes to sacrificing our comfort, we start to weigh things out. Our selfishness gets in the way of serving A LOT. And if we keep following its desire, we will eventually give up serving altogether. We cannot let our guard down. Whenever we feel it's hard to deny ourselves and take up the cross, let's remember The One who has denied Himself and took up the cross for our sake. Nothing, absolutely nothing, will ever be too much or too costly to give to God compared to what He already gave up for us.

2. Loveless serving

If you have been a born-again Christian for years, you may have formed a habit of serving, whether at church, workplace, home, wherever it is. But after some time, we start to do things out of routine and obligation instead of out of love, joy, and compassion. Sooner or later, we feel burdened by the things we do to serve God and others. But because we know it's the right thing to do, we drag ourselves to keep doing what we're doing. Sounds familiar? When we drag ourselves, two things can come to our mind: 1) "When is this gonna end? When can I be released from my responsibilities to do all these things?" or 2) "When is this gonna end? When can I stop dragging myself and willingly and joyfully serve the Lord again?"

While the action is good and true, God sees

what's in our heart, and these two attitudes come from two very different hearts. If we love Him, His commandments will not be burdensome. Coming back to our first love with God does not happen instantly. But when we feel like it's hard to love God, remember what 1 John 4:19 says: "We love because He first loved us.". Do not let ourselves forget the depth, the width, the length, and the height of His love.

3. Self-righteous

As Christians, we need to be careful to examine not only our action, but our motivation. We may already know that we shouldn't serve God to earn His blessings, but what we may not realise is that our serving may cause us to be self-righteous. We serve others to feel good about ourselves, to be seen as 'selfless' or 'humble' by others. Sooner or later we will feel that we are better than other people, and we start to judge others just like the Pharisees. We forget that we are all the same, just sinners who are saved by grace alone.

4. Losing heart

Another great challenge in servanthood is when there is an absence of progress. If we have been serving people in our lives and we don't see any progress at all, we can lose our hope and think that it's all in vain. We don't know if our ministry will ever bear its fruit, if the people we have been serving will ever get to know Jesus, so why should I keep doing what I'm doing?

1 Corinthians 15:58

“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

Paul said nothing that we do in the Lord will ever be in vain. Why? Because in Jesus we have the resurrection and eternal life, and therefore the reward of our serving is not only by seeing a progress or concrete result in what we do. We may never see the fruit of our ministry, but if we do, don't boast about it as if it's owing to our works. We can only do so much, but at the end of the day, God is the one who works through our works.

This journey of Christian servanthood is a lifelong journey full of ups and downs. One can never get it right all the time, but the beauty of it is that we can see how God still uses imperfect, limited people, and even sinners like us to execute His plan. When we serve, let's serve with joy and out of the abundance of God's love. When we do well, remember that it's all because of His grace. When we don't do well, remember there's still grace.



**Christian
community,
first and
foremost,
should
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Christ
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people can
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person of
Jesus and
believe in
Him.**

MINISTRY LIST

VOCAL



Jessica Sutiono

MUSICIAN



Raynaldo Ali

MULTIMEDIA



Budi Sendjaja

LIGHTING



Budi Sendjaja

SOUND



Steven Santika

USHER



Elbert Pranoto

TRANSLATOR



Elbert Pranoto

CARING



Felix Hariyadi

DANCER



Priska Sunaryo

DRAMA



Jennifer Chandra

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Reinetta Tanujaya

HOSPITALITY



Tasmin Ifah

INTERCESSOR



Monica Haryanto

MISSION



Felix Chietra

MEDIA ART



Sonia Pranatha

COMMUNITY KITCHEN



Yolanda Tjong

PODCAST



Ravello Satria

YOUTH



Rio Susanto

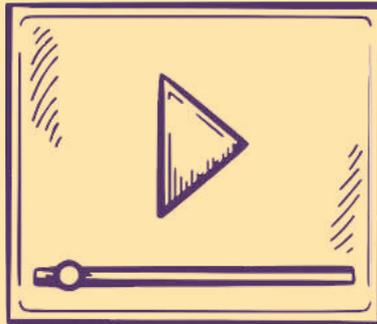
"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms"

**We invite you to join our
online service every Sunday**

**8.30 am
11.00 am
5.00 pm**

You can go to the link below:

bicmelb.online.church



**Let's celebrate the Lord's Day
together!**