**GOOD INTENTIONS AND COMMUNITY**

**Introduction:** We are the most connected society, but also the loneliest.

* Stats from the “Root of Loneliness Project” (27th March , 2024) states that in Australia, 62% of young adults, and 46% of seniors report being lonely.
* Humanity flourishes with human connection.
* The church lives to bring connection between humanity and God, and with each other.

Revelation 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say “Come!”. And let him who hears say, “come!”. Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

1. **Jesus’ Bride – the Church**

* Jesus introduced the marriage concept in Matthew 9:15, where He describes Himself as a “Bridegroom”.
* Both Paul and John build on this concept – not just as a good illustration, but as a revelation by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:25-27 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.*

* Gave himself
* Make holy
* Cleansing
* Radiant church

Ephesians 5:31-32 *For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.*

* Two will become one.

Revelation 19:7-8 *Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herslf ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)*

1. **Living it Out**

* Much of what we say or do is motivated from the soul.

Colossians 3:12-13 *Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

* ILLUSTRATION: Live volunteer to put labels on.

Colossians 3:14 *And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

* Binds together.

Colossians 3:15 *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

* Rule is in your heart.
* In every situation, Christ’s peace is to rule.

1. **Training for Relationships**

* Children: whether you are a parent or grandparent, children are welcome.
* Carers: responsible for training.

Proverbs 22:6 *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

* Train in the way he should go??
  + How do I know which way?
* Check for gifts and abilities
  + That helps you discern the direction God has for them.
  + NOT the carer living their life through the child.

Proverbs 29:15, 17 *The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother… Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.*

* Discipline is required.

Ephesians 6:4 *Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

* Exasperate = infuriate, provoke, embitter,

1. **Building Relationships.**

* Good friends are worth their weight in gold.
* Not everyone in the congregation will become your close friend.

Proverbs 17:17 *A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

* Loves at all times
  + Not competitive; not sinking to envy.
  + Someone that fights for you, not against you.
  + Some friends are closer than relatives.
* Meaningful conversations:
  + Conversations that are real.
* Gentle correction:

Proverbs 27:5-6 *Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.*

* Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

ILLUSTRATION: Davie and Jonathan

1 Samuel 18:1-3 *After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. From that day, Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father’s house. And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.*

* One in spirit
* Made a covenant.
* Jonathan was loyal until his death.

**Conclusion:**  Abraham was called a friend of God.

* We are called Jesus’ friends.

John 15:15 *I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my father I have made known to you.*