

## **PP Together!**

**Intro-Genesis 2**

**1/5-6/2019**

**PP** *Come Together* Video by the Beatles

As a boy, I was spellbound as I read a book of fiction by Daniel Defoe, called Robinson Crusoe. Crusoe was a young Englishman who was shipwrecked and cast ashore alive but alone on an uninhabited island off the coast of the New World.

He struggled terribly in his isolation and he cried out in despair.

**PP** *"I am cast upon a horrible, desolate island, void of all hope of recovery. I am singled out and separated, as it were, from all the world, to be miserable. I am divided from mankind – a solitaire; one banished from human society...I have no soul to speak to or relieve me."*<sup>1</sup>

Human-ness suffers when utterly alone for a long time, for we are meant to be 'together'.

**PP** That word '*Together*' originally came from a west Germanic word that meant to '*gather*'.

When speaking of people, it means to *gather* with each other, to be '*together*'.

Probably most of us did this as we moved through Thanksgiving and Christmas.

We are doing this right now as we have gathered for church to worship our God.

**PP** (sermon graphic) Today we are starting a new sermon series called **Together!**, and it aims to help us learn what it means to truly live together in the church, the body of Christ.

**PP** *There is no other place to experience true community than in the church!*

However, I am pretty sure that some of you, if you are listening closely, are revolting inside your mind at hearing this statement.

You may be saying, *I've never found it so difficult to make friends than in the church.*

You might be thinking, *I've never been hurt so often than I have at by people in church.*

Some undoubtedly are thinking *Wait a minute, my best friends are not even Christians, and my best times are those spent with unbelievers.*

What we will discover in this series, is that soul-satisfying community is both broader and deeper than teammates, best friends, affinity groups, and it is possible only in the church.

So to begin our quest to understand what it means to live together in the church, let's begin, of all places, at the beginning, in the book of Genesis.

**PP** *"Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone'"* **Genesis 2:18**

It hardly needs mentioning that up until now in the creation account, everything has been good.

But now, for the first time, God sees something '*not good*'.

Someone could read this and conclude that God made Adam, and then realized something was not quite right, so He corrected it.

I hope you would agree with me, that this was not a admittance of a divine oversight, but rather a declaration of the way He created human beings.

Maybe while creating Adam, He was singing the lyrics to *Three Dog Night's* smash hit One, '*One is the loneliest number that you'll ever do*'.

He knew not only because He has perfect knowledge, but because He has perfect experience. God is a relational Being.

When He was about to create Adam on the 6th day, God said, **"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."** **Genesis 1:26**

You likely have noticed them, but note again the pronouns in God's declaration: '*us*', '*our*' (2x)

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<sup>1</sup> Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Defoe

God has eternally existed as one God, but three Persons who have the same essence of deity  
The Father, Son and Spirit have eternally enjoyed the relationship they have with one another  
God is a relational Being, and He has made us in His image to be relational beings as well

Our relational God said, ***“It is not good that the man should be alone”***

We could say it another way...it is a bad thing for a man...or a woman to be alone

Too often people tie this verse only and directly to marriage as the only solution to aloneness

That is what God does for Adam by bringing him a wife

But it is broader than that, much broader, for even in marriage a couple can feel lonely

Not in the first few months of marriage perhaps...when the honeymoon bubble is still there

During that time of early romance, they feel they only need each other in this universe, everyone  
else is just optional

But it will soon, to their dismay, prove not fully satisfying to shut out all other relationships for  
just each other

They're designed by their Creator to live in community, and to come together with others in  
deeper, meaningful ways

There is, in God's design of human beings, a need to live life with other people...together

There are the occasional people who utterly disdain others, and prefer their own company at all  
times, but they are aberrations, and not the norm of God's intention

There are some, often the elderly, who find themselves alone in the twilight of their lives, and it  
is a miserable condition

According to an October 2018 London poll, 27% of elderly report struggle with loneliness

I am very thankful to several in our church who regularly visit the elderly, to be with them

However, perhaps it may surprise you to hear that the segment of British population that  
struggles with loneliness the most, is the 16-24 year old group

You can have 800 facebook friends, 1,000 Twitter followers and be living under the illusion that  
you are in deep, meaningful community

And by the way, society knows this...there are countless studies on it, and just as many efforts to  
help people find true community

XBox community has a great tagline: *'Here we all play together'*, and has 57 million subscribers

Social community app Meetup had over 24 million members in 2016 and likely has grown since

There is now a Rent-a-Friend website, with over 621,000 friends available world-wide<sup>2</sup>

With over 168 million Americans on Fb, 117 million on Instagram, there is obviously a universal  
desire to not be alone in life

One of my favorite movies is ***Cast Away*** with Tom Hanks who plays a character marooned on a  
South Seas Island for 4 years

Alone the entire time, the movie does an excellent job of portraying the psychological need for  
togetherness, with Hanks befriending a volleyball he names Wilson and interacting with  
it as if it is another human being

So what is the answer to this deep loneliness that so many struggle with?

How can the world find true community and togetherness?

I'm going to give to you the most definitive statement of likely this entire series

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<sup>2</sup> <https://rentafriend.com/>

But I need you to believe it, or at the very least I need you to consider it deeply

**PP** *The church is the only community where people who are joined with God can be together with each other*

I'm concerned that what you just heard is so underwhelming that you dismissed it out of hand  
It is actually a massively weighty statement, and one exceedingly repugnant to the world's ears  
Only in the church, the body of Christ can a person be together with both God and at the same time His people

It is at the intersection called the church that we were designed to live life

It is only in the church that someone can experience true community and togetherness

As powerful as it is to be part of the graduating class of 2019, or the Superbowl LII winning Eagles, or a support group of survivors from abuse...none of them can compare with the deeply soul satisfying power found in the body of Christ

If you cannot identify with that, and it is likely many of you cannot, then something has gone wrong

Either the church is preventing you from experiencing this, or you are preventing this experience from becoming a reality, or most likely, both

There is a way for us to become a community where relationship with God and with each other meet, a place where we can be together

Before I tell you how...I want you to reflect on a few questions with utmost seriousness

Will you do that?

We can all tend to be like babies who automatically open their mouths when the parent brings the spoon of baby food near

We almost strap in the Dinosaur ride at Animal Kingdom and go where the ride takes us

That is a very dangerous thing to do and I can illustrate to you why with this story

I am terribly nearsighted, and my right eye is worse than my left

When I was about 5 years old, my mom took me and two of my older brothers to Kmart

Kmart was a huge store, especially to a little kid, and my mom said *I'll see you boys later*

We took off on our own, and before long, my brothers, wanting to scare me, started fast walking taking turns down different aisles, speeding up until they were running to lose me

I started crying while running to catch them believing I'd never be found again if I didn't, my vision blurry from tears, and I tripped and landed face first into an end display stand with the steel hangers that are used to hold up the merchandise

The hanger went about 3 inches into my right eye cavity, just missing my eyeball, but I was stuck to it, screaming in pain and terror as I could see this rod going into my face

Here is my point: that story was true until I told you I tripped and a steel rod impaled my eye

If you are not careful, I could try preach all kinds of distorted messages and you might never realize it until I've led you onto the path that can erode your faith

So as I ask you some reflective questions...capture your mind and think on them seriously and don't just slip into self-drive mode

**PP** *Have you ever considered that every sin that we could possibly commit, is a break down in relationship, either with God Himself or others?*

Idolatry is a direct attack against God; stealing is against a person; coveting is a demand for what someone else possesses; lying is to deceive someone else

Sin has permeated every relationship, but we are meant, and designed to experience togetherness

**PP** *Has it ever occurred to you that the Ten Commandments are entirely showing us how to be together with God and God's people?*

The first 4 are how to love and be in community with God, and the second 6 are how to love and be in community with God's people

**PP** *Are you experiencing Christian community in deep and meaningful ways?*

Let me clarify just a bit and you'll see it's necessary

I'm not asking if you call Cornerstone Church your home church or attend each week

I'm not even asking if you have people in this church you call friends

I'm not asking if your life hit hard times, would there be people you can count on

I'm certainly not asking if you have people at work that you talk sports with, or a book club you belong to, or some people you play ball with on your lunch break

I'm not even only asking if you have a life group in the church you attend regularly

You can be in a book club, on a sports team, even in a life group, and still not experience deep, meaningful togetherness

Are you experiencing what can be found at the intersection of God and others, called the church?

Here's how it can become possible for you Christian brother and sister

Here's how it can be possible for our church to experience what it is we were designed for

There are 105 times, in 95 verses that we see the phrase '*one another*' in the New Testament

And they cover the gamut of how we can live life together in the church, by the grace of God

Just a few examples for you:

**PP** *"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."*

**Romans 12:10**

**PP** *"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32*

**PP** *"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Hebrews 3:13*

It is not good for us to be alone, without each other...we are designed to live life together

But I know, **PP** *'Together' is not possible without God and without our intentional obedience*

We must not fail...for when **PP** *"you love one another: just as I have loved you...all people will know that you are my disciples" John 13:34-35*

**PP** (Sermon series graphic) Welcome to our new sermon series, **Together!**

Amen

Pray