

JESUS STRONG WITH PEOPLE

Part 6 of Jesus Strong. Philippians 2:19-30.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. October 27, 2024.

NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS

The church is a network of relationships and connections between people.

- It is a body, family, team.
- The gospel brings people together so that relationships are essential to the church and Christian living.

We grow Jesus Strong when we grow healthy relationships in the church.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-30 (CSB)

Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon so that I too may be encouraged by news about you. 20 For I have no one else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests; 21 all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know his proven character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with a father. 23 Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 I am confident in the Lord that I myself will also come soon.

25 But I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus — my brother, coworker, and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my need — 26 since he has been longing for all of you and was distressed because you heard that he was sick. 27 Indeed, he was so sick that he nearly died. However, God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 For this reason, I am very eager to send him so that you may rejoice again when you see him and I may be less anxious. 29 Therefore, welcome him in the Lord with great joy and hold people like him in honor, 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up what was lacking in your ministry to me. Jesus obeyed the Father to the point of death on a cross.

TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS

Paul wrote Philippians from jail in Rome.

- In today's passage, he illustrates the importance of relationships through two examples: Timothy and Epaphroditus.

Paul planned to send T and E to the church in Philippi.

- Timothy traveled with Paul as his co-worker.
- Epaphroditus was sent from Philippi to help Paul in Rome.
- They were a "priceless pair" and excellent substitutes for Paul.
- If we model our lives on their relationship-building qualities, we will grow Jesus Strong with people.

SIX RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING QUALITIES

1. Commit to people - verse 20.

- Timothy was "like-minded."
- He loved the congregation as Paul loved them.

1 John 3:14 (CSB) We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers and sisters. The one who does not love remains in death.

2. Be real with people - verse 20.

- Timothy "genuinely" cared about them.
- The Greek word implies a built-in or second-nature concern for them.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 (CSB) Although we could have been a burden as Christ's apostles, instead we were gentle among you, as a nurse nurtures her own children. 8 We cared so much for you that we were pleased to

share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

3. Invest in people - verses 2021.

- Timothy cared about their “interests” - or welfare.
- He was willing to travel hundreds of miles to encourage them.

1 Thessalonians 3:2-3 (CSB) And we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s coworker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you concerning your faith, 3 so that no one will be shaken by these afflictions.

4. Serve people - verse 25.

- Epaphroditus was sent to Rome to help Paul in jail and trial.
- He was their “messenger” (apostle, messenger of Christ) and “minister” (leiturgos, liturgy, doer of holy work).
- Even menial tasks done on behalf of Jesus for his people are acts of worship and holy work.

5. Love people - verse 26.

- Epaphroditus “longed” for the Philippians. It describes the depth of his love for them.

5. Sacrifice for people - verse 30.

- Epaphroditus “came close to death for the work of Christ.” He was willing to lay down his life for Paul.

1 John 3:16 (CSB) This is how we have come to know love: He laid down his life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review the October 27 study guide (<https://www.famousgod.com/teaching-notes>)
- What were the highlights of the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

- Analyze 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12. Now answer the following questions about it.
- How do the two metaphors (nursing mother and loving father) help you understand the qualities needed to build strong relationships?
- What does Paul's example teach about building strong relationships?
- How would you summarize the passage, and how would you apply it personally? How would you teach it to a small group?

Prayers

- Pray for the Cornerstone family to build strong relationships on genuine care, service, love, and self-sacrifice.
- Pray for the Cornerstone Church - people, volunteers, staff, leaders.
- Pray for national spiritual awakening and revival in the American Church.