

Heaven is Relational, Church is Relational

At the heart of heaven . . . There is relationship; Father, Son and Holy Spirit

John 17:20-23 and 26

The bible is fundamentally about relationships; we get a hint from the word old **covenant** and new **covenant**!

The great commandment of loving God and loving our neighbour as ourselves is about relationship

It's estimated that 44% of the NT letters are about how to get along compared with 4% on spiritual gifts. This is particularly clear when we see how often the 'one another's' appear - the Greek word *allelon* appears 59 times!

Love one another (John 13:35 - this command comes 16 times)

Be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)

Honour one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10)

Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16)

Build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Be likeminded towards one another (Romans 15:5)

Accept one another (Romans 15:7)

Admonish one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16)

Care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)

Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)

Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)

Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)

Be patient with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)

Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32)

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:19)

Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5)

Consider others better than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)

Look to the interests of one another (Philippians 2:4)

Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)

Teach one another (Colossians 3:16)

Comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

Encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13)

Stir up one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24)

Show hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9)

Employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of one another (1 Peter 4:10)

Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another (1 Peter 5:5)

Pray for one another (James 5:16)

Confess our faults to one another (James 5:16)

We are to do these things because we **belong** to one another (Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:25).

All these commands do not take into account the things we are told not to do to one another!

It wasn't just us who lost something in the garden. God lost relationship and went looking for Adam.

In the story of the prodigal, what did the younger son feel in the arms of his father? Perhaps we don't experience true son ship until we have run away and then come back into His arms?

The way you love your wife shows the world what Jesus feels about His church. Our relationships teach and show the world. John 17. The church models heaven.

God's government is not rules, regulations and legislation, its relationship.

God is passionate about the restoration of relationships, ultimately with Him but also with one another. Look at the end of Malachi.

If relationship is at the heart of heaven, what is the heart of relationship?

Relationship acronym

Reality

Encouragement

Love & laughter

Acceptance

Trust

Inspiration

Open

Nurture

Sacrifice

Honour

Interdependency

Patience & perseverance

Jesus is all these attributes; they flow out of Him into us.

In summary

- The church is God's community through which family and relationships should be modelled and visible
- Relationship is at the heart of heaven; through Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- The bible is fundamentally about relationship
- Heaven's government is not about rules, regulations and legislation but relationship
- There are many constituent parts to forming and sustaining relationship – and they all exist in Jesus
- We need purposeful structures that are essentially relational and help us grow in our relationships with God, each other and our neighbours