

Creating Authentic New Testament Relationships

Ministry and leadership can be a lonely task, but we need not face this alone. One of the sad realities of mission and church leadership in Europe is just how many good godly men and women find themselves isolated and alone, devoid of meaningful peer ministry relationships and community. Too often this leads to disillusionment and burnout. It is abundantly clear that this is not God's intention, and neither is it necessary. This workshop explores how to create authentic New Testament relationships as gospel missionaries and leaders, and how to avoid becoming isolated and alone in ministry.

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Writing to the saints at Philippi, Paul provides a great insight into personal relationships within the early church, calling them his brothers, his beloved, longed for, joy and crown (Phil. 4:1), not terms used in a professional relationship. As their apostle he establishes a foundation of personal warmth, Godly delight, affectionate ambition, and ultimate commitment. Nowhere to be found are the formality and externalism which sometimes characterise the modern church. Let's try to rediscover the true nature of the church and the beauty of its fellowship.

I. **What do we mean by a relational culture?**

- A. Not a club I belong to, a business I am engaged in, or a lecture theatre I attend.
- B. Church is an intimate family.
- C. Leaders establish the culture of the family.

'Jesus in his ministry proclaimed the coming Kingdom of God and practiced its presence... he anticipated the future hope of the unrestricted, uncontested sovereignty of God, by extending God's rule in the present and inviting people to live within it.'

Richard Bauckham

II. **Paul's outstanding example** (Phil 4: 1)

- A. My brothers, my beloved, my longed for, my joy, my crown.

III. **It is not good to be alone**

- A. The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone...” (Gen 2: 18a)

‘We live in a world that tends to claim that the above three areas are what we need to live a fulfilling life. The lesson we learn from Adam is that he had all of these things and yet it was ‘not good’.’ David Ferguson

IV. **What can create loneliness?**

- A. Lack of biblical guidance

- B. Lack of trust (1 Cor 13: 7, Pr 17: 9, Pr 19: 11)

- C. Ambition (1 Kings 22:24)

- D. Insecurity (Num 11:27-30)

- E. Poor communication

- F. Divided loyalties (3 John 9-10)

V. **Creating authentic New Testament relationships**

- A. Pursue mothers and fathers

- B. Enjoy brothers and sisters

- C. Raise up sons and daughters