

Pete Campola

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Subject: Sorry guys I forgot to send this

40 Days of Community

A Set of Thoughts, Ideas, Questions and Ponderings
Submitted for your Digestion
September 26, 2005 Day 2

Introduction: We are all in “*this*” 2gether. No one is getting out alive. As we explore what it means to be in community through Rick Warren’s better together it is essential that we tailor make this study to fit our communities. This devotional is meant to be a conversation starter. It is personal musings on the daily readings’ subject. If another author is not noted then the opinions expressed are those of Jodi Haier and only reflect her understandings and her journey. If you do not wish to receive a devotional a day for the next 40 days, please respond to this email with a thoughtful “no, thank you” ” **Instead of just forwarding this *please* send people’s email to me. I am not trying to be a control freak but I want to know where God’s going with this. People viewing this on the webpage can contact the webmaster with any comments. THANKS! Jodi**

Fellowship 2gether: “cultivating a life in common”

(1Cor 1:10) p. 14 “He doesn’t just love you; he loves everyone else just as much...” God loved Mother Theresa, Gandhi, Martin Luther and John Wesley. God loved Hitler, Genghis Khan, and the Unabomber. Where do we fit in the picture? My parents love each of their daughters. Yet, we feel a drive to compete for the love we already have. Somehow we thought that we could make them love us more, approve of us more. We didn’t realize that unconditional love is already infinite and therefore there is no real concept of more or less. That kind of love just is. If we try to compete or earn more of this love, we are trying to contain it or control it. That would just diminish what it is.

We are grown-ups now. Accepting unconditional love will change every aspect of our lives. Instead of looking for that part of a disagreeable person that is deserving of love, we will look for God’s love working for that person. Our fellowship together needs to be based on that spark; it is the only thing to really build a relationship on.

Grow 2gether: “accepting, affirming, and advising”

(Rom 15:7, 1Thess 5:11, Col 3:16)

Dr. M. Scott Peck is author of such books as The Road Less Traveled, and The Different Drum, and he has also designed community building workshops that were popular in the 80’s. He has some interesting insights into the question, “What is Community?” (These quotes are taken from The Different Drum book on tape)

“It is quite natural for community to develop in times of crisis. And so it is in the waiting room of an intensive care ward, strangers will quite rapidly start talking to one another about their deepest fears and hopes as their relatives lie across the hall on the critical list. ...the problem is as soon as the crisis passes so does the community.”

Serve 2gether: “working 2gether with 1 heart & 1 purpose”

(Phil 2:2) God always acts first. This is one of those statements you either believe or don't. You could spend your life trying to prove or disprove it and end up with just a spent life. So, God loves us and more specifically you and even me. Skeptics might say, “Well that and \$2.00 will get you at least a cup of coffee.” Really consider the gift of God's kind of love. Grace, forgiveness, hope, joy, generosity, strength, perseverance, guidance and much more are offered through God's love. If all of that, in infinite supply, is in your Spiritual Bank account, what kind of checks can you write? Now collectively we access our Spiritual Bank accounts to impact one person, one problem, one relationship. We have a reason to love one another. It is not because we ought to, it is because we can. 1John 4:19 “We love because God first loved us.”

Worship 2gether: “come 2gether in my name”

(Matt 18:20)

HEALING RAIN

Matt Bronleewe, Martin Smith and Michael W. Smith

(1) Healing Rain is coming down
It's coming nearer to this old town
The rich the poor the weak and strong
It's bringing mercy and it won't be long

(3) Healing Rain it comes with fire
so let it fall and take us higher
Healing rain I'm not afraid
to be washed in Heaven's rain

(2) Healing rain is coming down
It's coming closer to the lost and found
Tears of joy and tears of shame
Awash forever in Jesus' name

(4) So lift your heads let us return
to the mercy seat where time began
and in your eyes I see the pain
Come salve this dry heart with healing rain.

Only You the Son of man
Could take a leper and let him stand
SO lift your hands they can be held
By someone greater the great I AM

So let it be in Jesus' name

Healing rain is falling down
Healing rain is falling down
I'm not afraid
I'm not afraid

It is raining today. A steady pitter-patter that may last all day. It will transform everything. Perhaps it will knock down all the allergens that are plaguing me. It will soften the soccer fields and green up our lawns. Sounds very practical and nothing like the lyrics to the song. God's love in us transforms us. I went out and twirled in the rain. I stretched out my arms, lifted my face and slowly twirled. I guess my mom didn't give me the sense to come in out of the rain. This storm contains the remains of Hurricane Rita. The precipitation contains the dreams of many people. It contains their tears of desperation, destruction and fear. But I choose for it to be healing rain. It won't help the pains in my joints and muscles. It won't clear the clutter from my desk. It won't destroy my livelihood and strand my loved ones. It will give me hope of a rainbow. God's promises, God's love in us, transforming the world. I don't think I'm Nero fiddling while Rome burns. I'm simply twirling in the gentle rain that is all that is left from a violent storm. There's hope in that. Today twirl in the rain, or at least don't run from it. Open your window and let the raindrops kiss your face. Let God's healing REIGN touch your life and transform you during this simple act of worship. And don't worry, you won't catch cold from twirling, your head may spin, but that's a good thing.

Reach Out 2gether: “get others to believe”

(Phil 1:27) God's love through us, _____ . Fill in the blank. Our love is finite. There is only so much we can do by ourselves. God's love through us, well that's another story. Are you a gatekeeper or a conduit? I've been both in my day. Sometimes I decide who will and will not receive the love God has granted

me. After all, I KNOW. Ok, I just think I know. All Right, I know I don't know, but I want to control it anyway. Geez, you guys are tough! When I try to be a gatekeeper God breaks my heart. Luckily for me, God tends to mend what he breaks. The only thing is, is that he doesn't just repair; he makes improvements according to his will. Generally, when God breaks my heart, the repairs leave it bigger and stronger than before. I can't help but let the love flow where God intended in the first place. When I am a conduit, I give up all control. God just uses me in the situation. Words and insights, which are not my own, flow. Compassion and empathy, that are beyond understanding, are administered in seeming unending supply. Joy and Light are spread in the darkness. And I am left dumb-founded. (Does that mean I was found dumb/stupid or dumb unable to talk?)

Other people know you and your daily limitations. Being a gatekeeper honors your limits. Being a conduit surpasses them. It is when you are a conduit, that others will believe in something bigger. That's evangelism. God's love through us, _____ . Fill in the blank.

*****Please pray for our Biloxi team!*****

Great Creator- We do not ask for travel mercies, even though our team is traveling. We ask for them to be safely placed within your will. Resource them, assure them, connect and love them through all their strengths and weaknesses. Grant them a homecoming in Biloxi, as they have granted your son a haven in their hearts. Lord, let them prepare you a sanctuary, in the midst of chaos; let your will be the word of hope. All this and more we pray in Jesus' name. AMEN.

***** If you are GROUP-LESS*****

Please call the church office at 736-7233