

**Pete Campola**

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**From:** Jodi Haier [jodester32@twcny.rr.com]  
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**To:** jodester32@twcny.rr.com  
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# 40 Days of Community

A Set of Thoughts, Ideas, Questions and Ponderings  
Submitted for your Digestion  
October 28, 2005 Day 33

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) The butterfly effect basically is the idea that, through the course of cause and effect, the breeze caused by a butterfly's wing can in fact cause a tsunami. Most people believe that one person can change the world but they think this person has to be a Gandhi or Mother Theresa. Marilyn Pontera was telling me just yesterday that the Red Hat Society was started with just 4 people. Now they number 800,000 in less than 10 years. What could seven people do? If we listed our skills and talents and anonymously gave them to a business, they would jump for joy over the treasure trove of resources. If a butterfly's wing can reshape a coastline and have sway over life and death, what can seven dedicated people do? Our fellowship together is designed to create a powerful force. Make sure that our vision is not clouded by our lack of self-esteem. Let's make our vision Christ sized. I think we are more of a force than a single butterfly's wing.

## ***Grow 2gether:*** "accepting, affirming, and advising"

(Rom 15:7, 1Thess 5:11, Col 3:16) There is a saying that goes something like: "I must be a mushroom because they keep me in the dark and feed me *fertilizer* all day." (editing for those delicate palates) If we were meant to be a fungus then being in the dark with a steady diet of fertilizer, would be our idea of fun. But we want truth and light. We don't want to be spoon fed mumbo-jumbo that has nothing to do with our God-given purpose. (Although I wouldn't mind being fed gumbo, but that's another story) Part of accepting, affirming and advising is giving people what they need, not what we want to give. It may be easier to push people into a closet or a box and only give them the trash we have leftover. It is blessed when we nurture each living being in our care to the best of our God given ability. Each type of plant requires different care. Too much sun burns their leaves; too much water rots their roots. Too much fertilizer ruins the soil and too little stunts their growth. We need to accept that we have an entire garden at our disposal. We can't treat everyone like a mushroom.

## ***Serve 2gether:*** "working 2gether with 1 heart & 1 purpose"

(Phil 2:2) I stayed at Casowasco last weekend. That is the United Methodist camp in Moravia. The meals there were and always are fabulous! Yet after one meal, I couldn't leave my plate at the dirty dish window. The dishes of other diners were stacked all willy-nilly in a Seuss-ian manner. I was afraid to breathe because it might have caused the straw to break the camel's back. So I went to the other side of the counter and started to stack like dishes 2gether. I dumped the glasses have filled with drink. I scraped plates that weren't dishwasher ready. I piled trays and plates and bowls. During the process, other people came and just tossed dishes in the empty spaces I had created. It wasn't until I had a clear system created that others started following the pattern.

I didn't realize the impact of what I had done until the following meal. When I went back to place my dish,

other diners had started the piles. The dishes were arranged. There was room and order. Now I know I'm not the first person to do this sort of arranging of the dirty dishes, but I was the one needed to remind people to bring order out of chaos in this time and place. This was more than just having 1 heart & 1 purpose; it was about having a clear plan for implementation. We all need that as well.

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

(Matt 18:20) Take a moment and consider all the things that you take for granted. When you open the door to your house, you expect all your stuff to be there. When you open the fridge or the cupboard, you expect to see food. You know that work and school is from Monday to Friday and church is on Sunday. (Saturday for some) What if you drove to church and it just wasn't there? I once posed the question: “What if our building burned down on Saturday; what would we do for worship?” I would still have songs to sing and the Word would still need to be heard. What if Niagara Mohawk turned off the power and/or heat? What if there was no water? There would be no coffee, no cookies, no PowerPoint presentations. Suppose the government locked our doors? This weekend during worship appreciate all of the blessings we enjoy. Find out how they are made possible. Become part of the miracle and help us continue to be a church that does not need walls, but is grateful for the sanctuary we have.

### **Reach Out 2gether: “get others to believe”**

(Phil 1:27) Have you ever just held someone in the midst of their anguish? This might mean physically holding, or it might mean something more. When my children are upset, I do not allow them to cry themselves to sleep. I don't want them to ever wake up to a lonely hollow feeling. I may not solve their problem. I don't even promise that everything will be alright. I simply am with them in their pain until it is bearable. That is the physical challenge.

Imagine that someone is struggling financially. It might be easy to just give them money to tide them over. It might be fun to invite them over for dinner. Have you ever listened to them? Have you held their family together until the worst of the financial storm has passed? Have you offered them financially counseling? (see Kevin Schmadel) Have you helped them put together a budget? Have you prayed for God to show the way to freedom from debt? Have you continued to love them through the empty pockets? Have you just been with them until the stress and strain is bearable?

Children go to sleep hungry. Families are without housing. Survivors have to begin again. People do not know the feeling of God's love. Everyone has faced some brokenness. Others will believe in you if you don't give up and stick it out. They will believe if we stand with them, through it all. Hold on!