

Pete Campola

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Subject: today's devotion

40 Days of Community

A Set of Thoughts, Ideas, Questions and Ponderings
Submitted for your Digestion
October 3, 2005 Day 9

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) PRAY - **P**eople **R**easily **A**ffirming **Y**ahweh. I have the audacity to pray for people. I see a need and attempt to breathe prayer into it. When people are in obvious need it is easy to pray for them. I have been led to pray for people that aren't obviously in need. These people look like they are at the top of their game. We know that humans are great at masquerading their feelings. (****Warning***** Song reference: "So take a good look at my face. You see my smile looks out of place. If you look closely it's easy to trace the tracks of my tears." Please credit the artist and lyricist.)

I'll give you 2 quick examples. Jim Kelly, former quarterback of the Buffalo Bills, was at Kingdom Bound. He was doing a live radio broadcast and signing autographs. Both my son and husband got his signature. I asked to pray with him. I held his hand and thanked God for Jim. I thanked God for the way he's used his fame and faith to serve. I asked God to continue to work powerfully in Jim's life. I asked for God's presence to be easily recognized in Jim's life no matter what life threw at him. And then I left. I found out that 2 days later, Jim's son, Hunter, died. He had been struggling with a fatal disease since birth. I'm glad that I was able to pray before the need.

I was at a dinner recently where the keynote speaker was a powerful woman. She spoke eloquently and with passion. She really moved the crowd. Being a powerful woman, she had many admirers and people vying for her attention. One of my friends invited her to our worship, just to refuel and connect with God. Definitely, an example of prayer in action. I didn't even introduce myself when I asked if I could pray with her. As I prayed, for her strengthening and care she prayed simultaneously. We asked God to be present in our lives and to lead us into our future. It was a moment and then it was gone. But in that moment of invitation and prayer my friend and I, recognized this powerful woman as a child of God. She is in need of prayer as much as the person with no power, in some ways, even more so, because her need was invisible.

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

(Rom 15:7, 1Thess 5:11, Col 3:16) The group that PRAYs 2gether stays 2gether. Take a moment to pray for the members of your group. Take another moment to pray for their concerns. Now comes the tough part, pray with them. Do you affirm God’s work in their life? Do you accept them as God made them? Do you understand and act upon God’s lessons through that person? I never really know what people mean when they say, “I’ll pray for you” or “You are in my prayers.” I am not a part of the prayer life of others. So I don’t know. I wonder if I am simply in their thoughts. Are they concerned about my situation? What if things are going well, do I leave their prayers? If you have any answers, I’d love to hear them.

I want to redefine, “I’ll pray for you,” to mean: I want to take time now and later to ask God to show the Spirit’s movement in regards to this situation. I want it to mean that we affirm that God is big enough to make good come out of everything, including death. I want prayer for someone to be an action rather than a platitude. I have enough people with me in spirit. I need people with me in action. What do you want that phrase to mean? Pastor Marilyn said this weekend in worship, “anything God can do, prayer can do.” God is not a casual fly-by-night, off-hand comment. “I’ll pray for you” needs to carry a bit more weight, and have sharper teeth. It needs consequences. It needs our attention and action.

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

(Phil 2:2) Trading spaces, While You Were Out, Clean Sweep, Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, Monster House, and Town Haul are all shows that change people’s environments to help them change their lives. Some of the service options that we have in our area seem to be focused on one-on-one relationships. Imagine the impact of redecorating the common room at Hall House, (for victims of domestic violence and their families). Maybe a community service needs an organizational overhaul. We can provide the people power the project needs. We can ask a designer to donate their expertise to the project. Or maybe a design class needs a project. Maybe one of the construction classes at BOCES needs a short term project. They might be willing to do something at the cost of materials. With the competition for the building material dollar, Lowe’s, Home Depot, 84 Lumber, Jay-K, Grossman’s Liquidators, AAA Pick & Pay, and Ace Hardware would love the opportunity for free positive publicity. Maybe a business needs a facelift. That facelift will affect the entire community. Think big! With God’s support anything is possible.

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

(Matt 18:20) If worship is all about my personal connection with God, then why do I need to go to church in the first place? I’ll respond to the question with a question. Do you use tin cans and string for all your long-distance calls? When God’s people are gathered in Jesus’ name, we create a high-speed digital connection, a conduit, a movement. It is the difference between 1 flashlight in the darkness and 100 high-power floodlights. We are strengthened by our numbers. We are taught and held accountable by lessons of people’s lives. Can you have a relationship with God without others? Sadly, yes. There is amazing beauty and simplicity in a pencil-drawn flip-book film. Compared however to the community created in a theater, the emotionality of light, color and sound and the altered reality of three dimensional characters, the flip-book fades. You were designed to live in community. Why would worship be a singular event?

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

(Phil 1:27) Last week, Rick Warren wrote that we are to love expectantly, with our eye on our reward. I bristle at how that can be construed. Simple statements such as this have a way of seeping into our consciousness and twisting our purposes. Love is its own reward. We do not love in hopes that God will pay us. We love because God first loved us. (This is a scripture reference from somewhere) We may never see the return on the love we give. That does not preclude our generosity. We need to be very careful on what we promise new believers. I like promising that God will mess up your life, but in a good way. Then when the miracle of transforming love is revealed in a person’s life, they will understand about God’s reward system. Please read the email from Roberta Matthews. She is on mission in Biloxi. What is her eye on?

Hey Y'all:

Thursday we went with a team from Tennessee..

Check out their website at (www.concordumc.com) and see pictures of the whole team. "The best meal we ever had." The woman's name is Jo. We have met some wonderful people. We worked hard all day then walked across the street to do it again.. Please pray that Jesus keeps us strong... The people are so appreciative. The woman's son worked side by side with us and worked twice as hard as everyone else but he felt the heaviest burden. Lina, Brenda and Joe found a woman 5 houses from where they were staying that had been living in her car for 30 days. They would not have found her had they not felt the need to walk that evening. Her name is Joan and she has been a recluse even before the storm and has lost two homes. Her car battery was dead and she could not roll her windows up so the bugs were eating her alive. She also had no bug spray. Lina, Brenda, and Joe got her a tent, bug spray, sleeping bag, water, ice and treats for her dog. Joe also fixed her battery so that her windows would roll up and her car could work. It rained very hard here last night so it was good that she had shelter. We got her a work order for her house/yard could be cleaned up. We need teams to come down here now. The people in church are praying that God sends teams to help them now. This church has done amazing things with very little. Homeless people are assisting others with food, etc... Roger has BEEN A BLESSING TO THIS Church with his work and he has become a integral member of the church. This morning he assisted in handing out communion..

Tomorrow Marg. is going to the schools to make connections so that Upstate schools can adopt schools/families in need down here. Roberta and Lina will be going to muck out houses. We have many pictures and videos to share but we do not have regular access to E-mail so we are not able to correspond that way.

We'll be here for three more days. A woman in church said something that made us all think. She prayed that no one would be forgotten or left alone without help. We only have three more days here. We're going to do our best to fulfill this prayer request, but know that we can not do it alone. Please share this message. They so desperately need help and assistance here.

Thanks y'all. We love you all and will see you soon...