

Rooted Together

Ephesians 3:14-21

Introduction

- Did you know that scientists now believe that trees "talk" to each other through their interconnected root systems? They share nutrients, exchange chemical signals about danger, and even take extra care of a nearby tree when it's sick.
- In Redwood forests, it's not uncommon to see a mature tree — a "mother or hub tree" — die, and around it springs up new trees in a perfect circle — a "fairy ring or family circle." The mother tree's roots give up all the remaining nutrients and produce offspring after it's gone.
- While the Bible has a lot to say about trees (e.g., the tree of life, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the fruitless fig tree, etc.), it also has a lot to say about community. And thinking about the way trees are **rooted together** to support each other, that's also our job within the church.
- You're a tree. The church is the forest. And God's design is for you to become an integral part of this family, to share nutrients, withstand danger, and take care of each other. So let's talk about what this community of the Lord's people supplies and how you fit into that design.

Rooted Together for Love

- The community of the Lord's people foster love — *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"* (John 13:34-35).
- Rooted together, we move beyond "foyer small talk" and into deep relational connection with each other. We'll never know how to help or when there's danger present until we deeply know each other.
- So, what's your role in this church? **Love one another** — *"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart"* (1 Peter 1:22). We turn our brotherly love (phileo) into a self-sacrificial love (agape), giving up our time and attention for each other's wellbeing.
- **Challenge:** Get to know someone here personally, connect with them, and understand them deeper than you have before.

Rooted Together for Holiness

- The community of the Lord's people fosters holiness — *"My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins"* (James 5:19-20).
- Rooted together, we don't let our brothers and sisters fight their battles alone — we fight together. We know that sin grows in the darkness, and together we shine God's light into the shadows of our lives to overcome sin.

- So, what's your role in this church? Confess your sins to one another — *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working"* (James 5:16). Sitting down with someone you trust, we get real about our struggles against sin and support each other.
- **Challenge:** Intentionally steer your conversation with a close brother or sister to talk about something you're struggling with. Or be an open ear if someone wants to share with you.

Rooted Together for Discipline

- The community of the Lord's people fosters discipline — *"But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one"* (1 Cor. 5:11).
- Rooted together, we don't just correct each other as acquaintances, we correct each other as family members. Though confrontation isn't fun or comfortable, we realize that it's our job to step in and pull someone out of the fire.
- So, what your role in this church? **Bear one another's burdens** — *"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"* (Gal. 6:1-2). If you're spiritual, it's your job!
- **Challenge:** If you see something, thoughtfully and carefully say something! Or just let someone know that you're praying about their situation.

Rooted Together for Growth

- The community of the Lord's people fosters growth — *"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"* (Eph. 4:11-13).
- Rooted together, we equip people broadly with God's word, but we most impactfully equip each other through intimate conversations. While the pulpit offers a regular opportunity for feeding, real growth takes much more than a few sermons every week.
- So, what's your role in this church? **Consider each other better than yourselves** — *"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 2:3-5). It's not about what the church can do for you, but what you can do for the church.
- **Challenge:** Keep a list of people and the areas they're trying to grow in. Support them in those pursuits by mentioning it in casual conversation. Pray for them specifically.

Rooted Together for Evangelism

- The community of the Lord's people fosters evangelism — *"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we*

are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me" (John 17:20-23).

- Rooted together, we don't just invite people to sit in the pew, we invite them to see Christ alive and active within this church. The model of a healthy church shines like a beacon through the darkness of the world, but only if you're doing your part.
- So, what's your role in this church? **Bear with and forgive one another** — *"bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive"* (Col. 3:13). Pay Christ's gift to you forward to others.
- **Challenge:** If there's someone you've previously had tension with, go to them and ask for their forgiveness. And forgive those who have offended you.

Conclusion

- The church builds love, holiness, disciple, growth, and evangelism through unity.
- We're not a social club of card-carrying members. We're deeply interconnected parts of the body — rooted together — and we need you in this work.
- Praise God for putting Christ in charge as our head. And praise him for bringing us all together to stir each other daily toward love and good works (Heb. 10:24).