

On Friday, February 16, at 5:35 PM (only FIVE minutes after scheduled departure; this MUST be a youth ministry record), around 25 of us set out on a journey to Santa Rosa Beach for the annual Buford Youth Group beach retreat. This drive was met with an unusual silence. It appeared to the adults that these teenagers had been through a long week at school, and they were tired. "Have no fear," the youth minister (Ben M) thought to himself. "By the end of this weekend, this will certainly be a different van."

Here is the question one must ask themselves. Why SHOULD Christians who are together feel a bond with other Christians? Why should Christians have a desire to spend time together building each other up? This van, in this specific instance, was full of people who had different interests, different backgrounds, and different outlooks on life.

There is only one reason for unity: Jesus. There is no other reason people in the church should be unified. There can be a desire for great culture and unity in a sports team, at a workplace, on a movie set, in a classroom, or many other worldly atmospheres. Still, Jesus is the only reason why people in the church should be unified.

Unfortunately, the church has run into a few problems over the years. Some people have looked at the church as a social club (1 Corinthians 11:19-21 illustrates the wealthy were gathering before worship to share a meal together, and they were leaving the poor out of the picture). Others have associated themselves with the church as a political stance (that went well in the Roman Empire and the Middle Ages). There have been many other reasons outside of Jesus that people have been a part of the church, and it does not end well. It ends with hate, disunity, pain, discomfort, and a lack of connection to the savior.

When we arrived at the beach, we quickly settled into the home where we were staying and peaceably slumbered as we prepared for the next day. As the sun rose, we gathered for a delicious breakfast and our first session. Our goal? Discuss how the church is designed for togetherness with unity in Jesus Christ.

Look at Acts 2:42–44

“[42] And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common.”

Notice what caused them to have all things in common. It wasn’t their ultra-similar backgrounds, it wasn’t that they were all of the same wealth statuses, it wasn’t because they all had the same interests or the same humor. It was because they were dedicated to the One who had saved them.

We challenged our teenagers this weekend with the exact thing we shall challenge the entire congregation: is the reason you choose to be a part of the fellowship of believers at Buford because you love Jesus more than anything else? If you have decided that this is the reason you are a part of the family here, the next logical question is, “What does this mean about every other person in this family?”

For you and me, we suddenly have a situation where we have to watch out for our family at all costs, spend time with our family, and grow with our family. We have to watch out for each other to make sure that every person in this body is connected to the body.

Today, do you believe that the church is the body of Christ, and what are you doing to make sure that we are better when we are unified together?

Questions to Think About

1. When I realize that every believer in the body is unified through Jesus, how could that change my approach to walking into the church building on a Sunday morning?
2. What is one specific thing I could do in order to get to know another member of the body of believers at Buford that I do not know very well?
3. What do you think is the cause of potential disunity among the body of Christ, and in what ways could I potentially be part of the problem?