

"YE ARE THE TEMPLE"

I. [1 Corinthians 3:16-17](#) [1 Peter 2:4-5](#) [Hebrews 12:12-24](#)

A. We used to sing the text I'm about to read...

*Know ye not, know ye not, ye are the temple? (3X) Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost...
Filled with praise, filled with power, filled with glory. (3X) Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost...*

B. 1 Cor. 3:16-17 (NIV) "*Don't you know that you yourselves (Ye is plural) are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.*"

C. The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro in the Ivory Coast, Africa, is the largest church in the world. It was designed to replicate St. Peter's basilica in Rome. It will hold 18,000 people--7,000 sitting and another 11,000 standing. It was built in the late 1980s by then president, Félix Houphouët-Boigny at the cost of 300 million dollars and he proudly called it 'the greatest church in the world.' One of the stained glass panes actually depicts Boigny as one of the Magi, offering a gift to Jesus. It's marble was imported from Italy and some of the columns are so large they contain elevators. There are over 7,000 square meters of stained glass and the annual cost to maintain the facility is 1.5 million dollars. You should also know this church sits almost completely empty every Sunday morning... (*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear...*)

D. 1 Peter 2:4-5 (ESV): "*As you come to Him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*"

E. We now worship in our own little cathedral but you all are what make this place beautiful and ornate. You're the imported marble columns and stained glass windows... You're the living stones that make this place jump... Some of you limp in here each week. Some of you come hurting in the natural and in the spiritual. Some of you come because you have to but you're pretty good once you get here. :-) Some of you can't stand missing. Some of you come hungry and thirsty. Perhaps some of you come out of a sense of religious duty but I'm guessing most of you touch the life of *The Living Stone*-Jesus in the lives of the living stones who call this place home. (I hope that's more and more the case...)

F. So are we a part of anything bigger? Are we just a renegade church on the edge of a little known town or are we connected somehow to something larger than we realize? Just a bunch of half-hearted *limpers*, marginally connected, (e.g. the walking dead) or are we among the living, breathing, church militant--commissioned to preach the Gospel, make disciples, called to be salt and light here and now, and to glorify God with every ounce of our talents, gifts, and graces? I believe the latter is true...

- 1) Hebrews 12:12-24 tells it far better than me...
- 2) We must never sell our spiritual birthrights in Christ Jesus for something cheap and worthless in the eyes of God!
- 3) Death comes via Mt. Sinai but life comes via Mt. Calvary...
- 4) The blood of Abel is about vengeance; the blood of Jesus is about forgiveness...

G. Today we get a little bit of extra time to fellowship together. Maybe you'll want to check out the chapel to see what's been happening. But be sure to check out the church (*the living stones*) before you check out the chapel. Hug some necks. Limp around together. Show honor where honor is due. Encourage somebody. Get to know somebody you don't know. Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost and ye are more amazing than ye know!

* Close with prayer...

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[1 Corinthians 3:16-17 \(NIV\)](#)

16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? **17** If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

[1 Peter 2:4-5 \(ESV\)](#)

4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, **5** you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

[Hebrews 12:12-24 \(NIV\)](#)

12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. **13** "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. **14** Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. **15** See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. **16** See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. **17** Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done. **18** You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; **19** to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, **20** because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." **21** The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." **22** But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, **23** to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, **24** to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

[Edifying Videos](#)

Do Christians Really Have To Go To Church? - Phillip Nation

<http://www.crosswalk.com/video/i-m-a-christian-but-i-don-t-like-going-to-church.html>

"Light of the World" - Godspell

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zq4GOqZ-L1l>

The Basilica of Our Lady of Peace of Yamoussoukro

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrcfPdTRu0M>

"Know Ye Not Ye Are The Temple"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve17KimhKwk>

Moscow Street Car - Amazing!

http://www.youtube.com/embed/s_IHDJQuDmo?rel=0

High Schooler with Down Syndrome Hits Four 3s To Close Out Game

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QkpGkIfAdJ0&feature=youtu.be>

[Bonus Stuff](#)

[Ephesians 2:19-22 \(NIV\)](#)

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. **21** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. **22** And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

[2 Corinthians 6:16 \(ESV\)](#)

16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

[Psalm 27:4-6 \(NLT\)](#)

4 The one thing I ask of the Lord—the thing I seek most—is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord's perfections and meditating in his Temple. **5** For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. **6** Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the Lord with music.

[How To Create Community In Your Church](#)

By Daniel Darling

<http://www.crosswalk.com/blogs/daniel-darling/how-to-create-community-in-your-church.html>

As a pastor of a small church, I'm particularly sensitive about building a sense of community. I don't think community is just another 21st century buzzword, I think it reflects the body life described for the church in the New Testament.

For example, in our [latest study of the Lord's Prayer](#), I've been struck by Jesus instructions for how to pray. You will notice the use of the plural. "*Our Father*", "*Give us our daily bread*", "*Forgive us our debts*." This pattern is all through the gospels, the epistles, the pastoral letters--commands and encouragements given in the plural. The point is this: Christianity was not meant to be lived individualistically. When you put your [faith](#) in Christ, you are baptized into a body, joined to a people.

So it is an important function of the church to create environments where this body life, this community, can flourish. Much of this falls on church leadership. They must work hard to create environments for God's people to fulfill the "one-another" commands, where gospel fellowship, confession, repentance, friendship, encouragement, and life can happen together.

But there is a role for the church member as well. Since I've been in some form of church leadership for a long time, I've really never had the experience that many Christians have in choosing a church. But in talking to people who have joined our church and talking to friends, it seems finding community is at the top of the list when deciding between equally strong, gospel-preaching churches. People will attend and stay at a church where they have friends. But what role do the church members, not the leaders, have in creating such an environment? I want to offer five ways for church members to create community. You'll notice that these are more pragmatic in nature. I didn't mention things like small groups, bible study, etc. Those are sort of assumed. I'm talking here really of just developing friendships.

1) Attend the Potlucks

I realize that if you attend a large church you may not know what a potluck is. And if you attend a small church, maybe you think it's outdated. I realize that I'm speaking out of my own experience at a church under 100 in attendance. But my larger point is this: attend social functions at your church. You may think that potluck or chili cook-off or ice-cream social is kinda lame. Maybe there is an NFL game on that night. Maybe you're on a vegan diet. Maybe you'd rather clean out your car. You should attend the potluck anyway and here's why: you can't create community simply by going to church on Sunday morning, checking it off your list, and going home. At some point you need to break bread with people, to experience life with people, to see where your church is going as a body. There is a lot in Scripture about "breaking bread" together, because something beautiful happens when people enjoy a meal together. It breaks down differences and unites you in your need to sustain yourself with food. I've often said that what happens at a potluck may be as important as what happens in church. Don't mistake what I'm saying. Preaching and corporate worship are vital to the body. So is good doctrine. But you can do those two things and not have community and therefore not experience body life and therefore experience a void in your relationship with God. So, go to the potluck and eat the bad lasagna. You'll thank me later.

2) Host other people at your home

If you want to experience community, you need to invest yourself in creating it. In my five years of pastoring, I've noticed something kind of funny. All the friendly people who go out of their way to make friends somehow manage to develop deep friendships. And all the stand-offish people who don't lift a finger to create friendships seem to complain about not being able to make friends. Relationships take work, they take time, they take effort, they take intentionality.

And if you believe the local church is important, if you think that the way we love each other is a picture to the world of God's love for us in Christ, then you'll not consider your church friendships as a sort of neat option, but as something vital to God's mission. Maybe you've never thought of this before, but it could be that having another [family](#) over to your house for dinner and developing lifelong, deep Christian friendships may affect the gospel proclamation in your community. Putting that extra roast in the oven may seem sort of pedestrian, but it may be contributing to God's mission in your community.

There is a level of discipleship and spiritual growth that only happens in long conversations over food.

3) Help someone move

It's amazing how much you can learn about a person as you are lifting a couch with them. I know it sounds weird, but working with someone, outside of church, outside of the sort of dressed-up official Christian functions goes a long way to developing life-long relationships. Plus, as Christians, we're supposed to serve our brothers and sisters in the Lord in their needs. So maybe it's giving an elderly person a ride to the doctor or maybe it's helping a Christian brother with his basement remodeling job or maybe it's shoveling snow for a widow. Either way, you develop deep, good, rich friendships as you are working and sweating and struggling alongside people and learning their unique sorrows and joys.

I've found myself that once I've spent a day with someone doing something other than church stuff I've gone somewhere with that person. I've learned about their jobs, their families, their history. I've earned a bit of relationship capital, the right to speak into them and they've earned that with me.

4) Get involved in a ministry

Again, I'm showing my small-church bias here. In a larger church, ministry opportunities may not be as readily available. Maybe they are. Regardless, you begin to make the church community your own by rolling up your sleeves and getting involved. Taking ownership of an area where you can apply your unique set of gifts and talents. And in many cases, you get a chance to work alongside someone you may not know. Perhaps it's folding bulletins or maybe it's working on a church project. Last year we remodeled the outside of our building. Many of our guys came out to work on Saturdays--as a result we got to know each other very well and developed deeper friendships. Many who work in our children's ministries have said the same thing--they've had the chance to get to know and make friendships as they've worked alongside others.

Plus, by serving in whatever capacity you are gifted and wherever there is a need, you demonstrate to the church body that you care about them, that you're not just at church to receive, but to give, that the welfare of the church matters to you. So much so that you're willing to give time and effort to ensure the community is served.

5) Know and pray over the needs of others

Do you pray for the people of your church? Do you know what to pray for? In order to pray rightly for your brothers and sisters, we actually need to know what their needs are. And to receive intercessory prayer, we need to be a bit vulnerable and share our own needs with others. Every church has a different mechanism for prayer requests. You have the formal lists that go out via email and other forms--we should take these seriously and pray for them. But you might also find that person who sits next to you at church this coming Sunday and just lean over and say, "Is there anything I can pray about for you today?" And perhaps if you're having a difficult season, you might ask someone in church to pray for you. Open up a bit and say to them, "Hey, I could use some prayer--would you mind praying with me?"

I've found this to be a vital part of my own spiritual life. I have several folks in the church that pray for me specifically. I've had moments where I've pulled in a brother and said, "Hey can we pray over this really quickly?" And I've had brothers and sisters pull me in and ask for prayer. Something powerful happens in a friendship when you pray together.

Small Churches

Dr. Dale A. Robbins

<http://victorious.org/>

Did you know that 90% of all Christian churches in America are small congregations? Since we live during a time when there are more large churches than ever before, many people are often surprised to learn that the strength of Christianity in the United States still relies on smaller churches. It is a fact that if small congregations were deleted from the map, Christianity would become a tiny, obscure religion, dwarfed by cultic philosophies such as Islam, Mormonism, Buddhism, or Jehovah's Witness.

Even though some larger churches have been celebrated for their phenomenal growth, their combined total only represents a fraction of Christianity. The average size of a church in America is around 100, and the largest percentile of churches have an attendance of less than 50. Out of the nearly 350,000 U.S. congregations, less than 5% will ever see an attendance of more than 700. Consequently, the backbone of American Christianity still rests squarely on the shoulders of the small church.

These statistics, combined with the fact that Christianity in the United States has continued to decline over the last twenty years, tells us a lot about the importance of the small church. Each of the thousands of smaller congregations is strategically important to the overall mission of Christ in America. In fact, if every small church grew only by 1% in the next two years, it could reverse the entire decline of Christianity in our nation, and translate into hundreds of thousands of new converts added to the body of Christ.