

WHY DOES RAYMOND ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH EXIST?
WHO ARE WE?
WHAT ARE WE ALL ABOUT?

RRBC is here for 5 purposes

from Great Commandment (Matt 22:37-40)
and Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20)

- “The purpose of Raymond Road Baptist Church is to help every person reach MATURITY in Christ. This purpose is to be accomplished
 - by valuing and embracing MEMBERSHIP in God’s Kingdom and in the church,
 - by faithfully participating in such activities that MAGNIFY God,
 - by actively engaging in MINISTRY for the benefit of others, and
 - by answering God’s call to join him in his MISSION of redemption.”
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- MAGNIFY – Worship (“Love the Lord with all your heart”)
 - MINISTRY – Ministry (“Love your neighbor as yourself”)
 - MISSION – Evangelism (“Go and make disciples”)
 - MEMBERSHIP – Fellowship (“Baptizing them”)
 - MATURITY – Discipleship (“Teaching them to obey”)

FELLOWSHIP INTRODUCTION

- Story of Acts 2:42-47, our purest example of what it looks like for Christians to have deep fellowship as a community of believers
- Passionately devoted
- Bible teaching and discussions
- Prayer, prayer, and more prayer
- Miracles, people were awestruck
- Shared everything
- Sold things to pay for the needs of others
- Day by day, constant and continuing
- Supper together night after night
- People were impressed by watching what was happening
- Lots of people joined in
- A TASTE of heaven

Acts 2:42-47

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**. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and **distributing the proceeds** to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and **breaking bread in their homes**, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

What this time of Fellowship WAS NOT:

- No one livestreamed in or joined in by Zoom or by FaceTime
- No one had to catch it later in a video, or to read about it in a text, because everything happened face-to-face
- No one said that they were too busy to make it
- No one quit coming to it because they were mad at someone
- No one sat on the couch to avoid having to come (they wanted to be there)

- No one said they could not make it because they had to take their kid somewhere else
- No one came, but then avoided interaction by scrolling on their phone
- No one pulled up something to watch on TV so there would be something in the background

HOW do we get to the place of fellowship LIKE THAT?

A fellowship that...

- Shows to the world how different races can be ONE unified group
- Does not split into different denominations
- Needs no government help at all, because everyone is taken care of
- Needs no nursing homes, no orphanages, no DHS, no food banks, no welfare income
- Needs no drug recovery, no Alcoholics Anonymous, because no one has time or desire to take the edge off
- Actually knows each other, going deeper than just small talk
- Prays for longer than 5 minutes
- Thoroughly enjoys discussions about God and his scriptures and the things that he's up to
- Met together day after day for worship and for supper, not just on Sunday
- Completely filled the deepest needs of the human heart to love God and to love others, so much so that more and more and more people joined in all the time

HOW? HOW CAN WE STIR UP EACH OTHER?

- Hebrews 10:24-25
- Let's think about HOW to do this
- Stir up one another
- To love
- To good works
- Not neglecting to meet up (some are in the habit of neglect)
- Encouraging one another
- All the more, and more, and more

Hebrews 10:24-25

24 And let us consider **how to stir up** one another to love and good works, 25 **not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and **all the more** as you see the Day drawing near.

HOW? BY BEING UNIFIED INTO ONE BODY

- Romans 12:4-13
- One body
- Many members, many parts
- Not same function
- Gifts differ
- USE what you have!
- Love one another
- Give honor

Romans 12:4-13

4 For as in **one body** we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so **we, though many, are one body** in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us **use them**: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; 7 if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; 8 the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

9 Let love be **genuine**. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. 13 **Contribute to the needs** of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

HOW? BY BEING UNIFIED IN OUR THINKING

- Philippians 2:1-4
- Same mind
- Same love
- Full accord
- One mind
- Others more significant
- Interests of others

Philippians 2:1-4

1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being **in full accord** and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count **others more significant than yourselves**. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but **also to the interests of others**.

HOW? BY BEING UNIFIED THROUGH LOVE

- 1 John 4:7-11
- Love one another
- Love is from God
- Whoever loves, knows God
- God is love
- This is love, that He loved us
- IF God so loved...
- WE ALSO ought to love

1 John 4:7-11

7 Beloved, let us **love one another**, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, **we also ought to love one another**.

FELLOWSHIP CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT LOVE

- 1 Corinthians 12:14 – 13:13
- (FOR THIS PASSAGE, STRIKE FROM YOUR MIND THE PICTURE OF A WEDDING. INSTEAD, PICTURE A CHURCH WORSHIP AND A POTLUCK.)
- One body, many members (parts)
- Can say “I do not belong” but are not ANY LESS a part of the body
- God arranged these body parts
- Cannot say “We don’t need you”
- Weaker parts are necessary
- Dishonorable parts are given honor
- Unpresentable parts are treated with more modesty
- God composed the body this way
- No division, treat all parts with same care
- If one part suffers, then ALL suffer
- You are all together the BODY OF CHRIST
- And individually, are parts of the whole
- All kinds of gifts (apostles, prophets, teachers, etc)
- MORE EXCELLENT way...
- IF I... (have an impressive gift)
- But do NOT love...
- Nothing!
- LOVE IS...
 - patient, kind, ~~envy, boast, arrogant, rude, insist on your own way, irritable, resentful, rejoice at wrongdoing~~, rejoices with truth, bears all, believes all, hopes all, endures
- Love NEVER ends
- Faith / Hope / Love, but GREATEST is love

1 Corinthians 12:14 - 13:13

12:14 For the body does not consist of one member but of **many**.
15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would **not make it any less a part** of the body. 16 And if the

ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would **not make it any less a part** of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, **God arranged the members** in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are **many parts, yet one body**.

21 The eye **cannot** say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the **parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable**, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the **greater honor**, and our unpresentable parts are treated with **greater modesty**, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But **God has so composed the body**, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be **no division in the body**, but that the members may have **the same care for one another**. 26 If one member suffers, **all suffer together**; if one member is honored, **all rejoice together**.

27 Now **you are the body of Christ** and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But **earnestly desire the higher gifts**. And I will show you **a still more excellent way**.

13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not **love**, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not **love**, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not **love**, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the

partial will pass away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13 So now **faith, hope, and love** abide, these three; but **the greatest of these is love.**

A WEDDING IS AN INTIMATE JOINING OF A MAN AND A WOMAN INTO A LIFELONG PARTNERSHIP.

FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS SHOULD ALSO BE INTIMATE AND LIFELONG, CONTAINING ALL THE AFOREMENTIONED WAYS OF LOVE.

OUR CHURCH EXCELS IN FELLOWSHIP. BUT WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE WE ARE A DEEPLY TRUE ACTS 2 FELLOWSHIP.

HOW WILL GET CLOSER TO THAT GOAL?

- By being unified into one body
- By being unified in our thinking
- By being unified through love