The Power of Mutual Care

 A before we start, I want to give credit to my son David Hamlett and his congregation for this sermon. This subject was in an article in their church’s bulletin. It applies to Christ’s church everywhere including here in LaGrange.

When every member of the local congregation is “doing their share” they will have fulfilled the “effective working of God’s plan”.

Let’s read Ephesians 4 vs. 11-16. We all have different responsibilities or parts of the body but we together cause the growth of the church in love. When every member supplies mutual care for one another, there is something great about mutual action. There is no self-serving or selfishness in mutual care. Others benefit from your care and you benefit from their care and neither will be shortchanged. Let’s talk today about mutual care that is the common relationship we should have with each other in Christ.

According to the Scriptures our congregation is to be an undivided group. We are to speak the same thing with no divisions, perfectly joined together, the same mind, and the same judgment. Let’s read I Corinthians 1 vs. 10 and see what Paul told the Church at Corinth. Then let us look at what Paul told the church at Philippi in Philippians 1 vs. 27. We are to be like minded, of one accord, and of one mind. Read Philippians 2 vs.1- 2 we are to be without division- unified of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in the spirit, intent on one purpose.

I have 4 points today.

1. We will talk about the power of mutual involvement
2. The Power of mutual edification
3. The power of mutual exhortation
4. The power of mutual consolation

Let’s talk about the power of mutual involvement.

The scriptures tell us to be a mutually involved group. We all are involved in doing our share. We are all involved in caring for one another, as we should. Let’s read Romans 12 vs. 9-18. All are involved in the spread of the Gospel Read Mark 16 vs. 15-16.The power of mutual involvement only works if we see ourselves as part of the effort. I ask the question are we all part of that effort? As a Christian, I need what you supply. Your comfort; your understanding of God’s word; your confidence; your friendship; your love and your abilities that I do not have. It is easy to convince yourself to do less than you can, but as a Christian and an important part of the work, we must so all that we can. The Parable of the Talents teaches us that the Lord knows our ability and expects us to live up to that ability (do not read) Matthew 25vs.15 tells us according to our own ability. When we have the ability, we must use it fully. Read Romans 12 vs. 6-8. The Lord is continually reinforcing the idea that from the least to the greatest we are all part of His work. There is power in mutual involvement- with it we accomplish God’s plan.

Now let’s talk about the Power of Mutual Edification

According to the scriptures, we know that this congregation here at the La Grange church of Christ is supposed to be our oasis from the world out there. There are many pressures that we need a break from. Have you ever thought about our church that way? Do you feel that you can get recharged, that you can feel wanted and comforted from the ravages of the world? We come together to encourage each other. When one is down, we lift them up. If we feel alone, our members can lift us up. When our earthly family is having problems, our spiritual family can save the day. There are *temptations*: Read James 1 vs. 13-15, I John 2 vs. 15-17, There are *peer pressures*: I Corinthians 15 vs. 33 says “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.” Read, I Peter 4 vs. 1-5 We will have to give an account. And certainly there are various types of *trials*. Read Peter 1 vs. 6-9. As brethren in our oasis, we are to be kindly affectionate giving preference to one another Romans 12 vs. 10. We are to be “patient” and comforting. We are to be gentle, patient, bearing one another in love. Ephesians 4 vs.2. We are to be kind, tender-hearted and forgiving Ephesians 4 vs. 32. We are to love one another. Read I Thessalonians 4 vs. 9. We are to comfort and edify one another Read I Thessalonians 5 vs. 11. Mutual edification only works if we are present and providing it. It can’t be today all is fine and tomorrow we are at odds.

We must be present and on time to provide each other’s needs. Let’s read Hebrews 10 vs. 24-25. To consider one another, to see, to hear, to express concern immediately we must be here. To stir up love, to respond to the other’s needs, to support, encourage and direct, we have to be here. I we want to stir up good works often a delayed response to the need is too late. Folks I struggle with this. I tend to delay things when I should be doing it now. We need to work giving the most goodness in the present. Now. There is power in mutual edification. With it we can strengthen each other toward doing God’s will now. We come together; we recharge our Christianity in a world that is turning away from God. We talked about it on Wednesday night. The world is quickly changing. The country we live in is quickly changing. As with Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, there will always be a remnant of God’s people. We cannot depend on others to be that remnant. We have to do all we can not to fall into the world. When we edify each other, we can make a difference. Folks, look around. Churches are doing anything to get people to attend. A church, my brother goes to has motor cycle day. They actually bring motor cycles into the sanctuary. Brethren, even the church that calls themselves the church of Christ in Texas is allowing women to preach, to conduct communion, to lead the congregation. People come in classes with coffee and doughnuts. I like coffee and doughnuts. But their priority becomes coffee and doughnuts not the word of God. The social gospel is becoming the draw and not the word of God. We have to edify each other in God’s word. That has to be the draw.

The power of mutual exhortation

Exhort means to encourage, to embolden, to cheer, to advise. The primary sense in scripture is to excite or to give strength, spiritual courage. As a congregation there is a time to evaluate or judge one another for the purpose of one’s betterment. We must judge only with righteous judgment Read John 7 vs. 24 but only according to the word of God, which is profitable for proper judgment reproof. Let’s read 2 Timothy 3 vs. 16-17. It is a beneficial thing to properly exhort correction. In doing so, we can gain back our brother Read Matthew 18 vs. 15-17. We can restore one to Christ Read Galatians 6 vs. 1-5. And we can save a soul Read James 5 vs. 19-20. Once corrected, we need the encouragement to continue so we do not become harden or deceived by sin Read Hebrews 3 12-14. We need encouragement to hold fast to our faith. Read Colossians 1 vs. 19-20 so that we will receive in the end of our faith the salvation of our souls Read I Peter 1 vs. 6-9. We need to remember mutual exhortation only works if we offer and it is accepted. Everything hinges on wheither we receive the blessing or we give the blessing. In both situations, it has to be with a loving heart. We must be careful to be humble in our correction of our brethren and that same humility needs to be used in evaluation yourself. You cannot let pride or envy get in the way. Mutual exportation requires a true standard- not just opinions. God’s word has to be our standard. But we have to truly desire what is best for each other Read John 13 vs. 34-35. And lastly we must have a willingness to accept exhortations and well as offer them. There is power in mutual exhortation- which can properly correct and encourage each other in doing God’s will.

The power of mutual Consolation.

We want to be able to comfort one another. Read 2 Corinthians 1 vs. 3-7. God comforts us so we need to carry that same comfort to our brethren. We endure sufferings in our life. A child that is gravely sick or has a birth defect. A spouse gets cancer. Your child you taught all your life leaves the church. The spouses and parents need the encouragement of all that is around them especially fellow Christians. We have the ability to comfort because we have the hope of God and we know he does not give us more than we can bear.

Paul speaks of the comfort he received from God who comforts the depressed because of the pressures in this world. Let’s read II Corinthians 7 vs. 1-7. In these versus, no one likes to correct a person even in love. But the sorrow turns to joy for one another in that a soul is saved from eternal death.

But mutual Consolation only works if we have humble hearts and carry that humbleness to consol with other Christians.

To summarize, we need to remember that:

1. The power of mutual involvement only works if we see ourselves as part of the effort.
2. Mutual edification only works if we are present and providing it. It can’t be today all is fine and tomorrow we are at odds.
3. Mutual exhortation only works if we offer and it is accepted.
4. Mutual Consolation only works if we have humble hearts and carry that humbleness to consol other Christians.

In conclusion, mutual involvement, mutual Edification, mutual Exhortation and mutual Consolation fulfills the effective working of a loving growing church. Self serving and selfishness are things of the past for all of us. We now want to seek to strengthen each other against the wear and tear of this world.

The lesson is yours. If you are not a Christian. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Are you willing to confess that? Are you willing to repent of your sins and to be baptized to wash away those sins? Or as a Christian, you are wandering on your own and that you want to have that oasis and the benefit of a loving church and you are not quite there. Let us pray for you and help your receive that comfort. If we can help you in any way, please come as we stand and sing.