

Sharing

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon emphasizes the importance of sharing in the church, learning the language of the unsaved, and sharing truths with others to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

Duration: 40:05

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Sharing"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of sharing the word of God with others. He emphasizes that it is our responsibility to communicate what has been communicated to us. The speaker suggests that sharing what we have learned helps us to better understand and internalize the teachings of the Bible. He also highlights the need to communicate in a way that can be understood by others, especially new believers who may still have limited knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the commandment to teach and disciple all nations, as stated in Matthew 28:19-20.

Transcript

Acts chapter 14. We've called the message of the morning sharing. We could have called it fellowship or communion, for the same word would have been appropriate, the same word translated as communion and fellowship, and we have used it in modern English as sharing.

But we see it in this situation in which we have recorded in verse 26 through 28 of Acts 14, and they sailed to Antioch from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode a long time with the disciples.

The ministry of the apostle Paul was singularly personal. No one else had quite the ministry that he had, but at the same time it was in the church. I am a strong believer personally in the essential nature of the local church.

We in the present day see on the horizon a great many individuals whose names are commonplace and household, and undoubtedly they're all being used for good and in some way for the glory of God. But I have steadfastly resisted through the years of ministry any effort that would express me from the church,

for I believe very much in the local church. Not in its perfection, nor necessarily even in its perfectibility, but in its integrity.

And the fact that this is God's plan and this is God's method, this is what the Lord has intended. We find that he has fixed as part of his very command to the disciples that they are to go and preach the gospel to every creature. Some would think that this is sufficient.

There are those who would feel that this is all that's necessary, preach the gospel, win people to the Lord, and turn them loose. Not so at all. For we elsewhere find that he said, go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.

For the entire duration of the ministry of Christ to a lost world, through the redeemed ones, there was this responsibility of teaching, instructing, and bringing to maturity. The Lord Jesus said, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We believe that it was his intention that right on down to the time that he comes for his bride, or he comes again to bring judgment upon the earth, that there should be a continuation of the church, the local church, that it has through the years suffered greatly.

It's been attacked from every quarter. It has gone through no end of persecution, but whenever God moves, he does over again the thing that he started in the beginning. A small company of believers gathered together, small or large as the case may be, bound together, we would like to believe, or as intended at least, by the Spirit of God for their own nourishment and instruction and encouragement, and also as a vehicle of witness to the community.

The church is God's method. This is God's way of revealing the Lord Jesus Christ to the community by individuals that personally come to know him, enter into a vital living relationship with him, bound together in fellowship with other individuals around the Lord Jesus, gathering to him, and then from this center of nourishment and center of fellowship, each becoming a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the Lord's plan.

He's used it, he's blessed it, and when the church that we are meeting with today becomes no longer usable, he may have to do as he's done in the past, close it, but be sure of this, he'll open another very much like it somewhere else. There'll be another group established. For whenever there has been a time when salt lost its savor and became good for nothing but to be cast out and fraud and underfoot of men, the Lord's method has been to bring back again that which he intended the first to be, and it refused to be.

And so frequently we read books about the church, we've had many messages on the church. For some months now I've been speaking to you about fellowship, because I am convinced that the church can only be what it ought to be, and God's intended it to be, when the individual believer is in the relationship with the Lord Jesus and with other believers that he ought to have. That to speak of the church in its abstract sense and to pray for and to seek to bring the church to what it ought to be by speaking of the church will fail, because it's like revival.

You do not have revival by preaching sermons describing how wonderful revival is and how necessary it is. Revival doesn't come by proclamation concerning revival. It comes by dealing with the specific items.

You don't have a house by discussing how splendid it is to have a house, how magnificent the floor plan is, how easy it is to heat and to clean. You have a house by digging a trench and pouring in concrete and laying blocks and putting wood together with nails and doing item by item what needs to be done in order to have a house. And so frequently we have had many messages about revival which haven't produced revival.

They've induced us to do it. Then when we're convinced that we ought to have revival, the thing to do is to go out and to do the first thing necessary to have it, and take then when that's done to do the next thing necessary to have it, until step by step and item by item the matter is dealt with. Now I firmly believe that revival is as much a matter of law as building a house.

Likewise I believe a church, a New Testament church, is as much a matter of law as is the revival or the house. There are spiritual laws which God has clearly established which when understood and obeyed will have the effect of producing what we're seeking. But it behooves us to recognize that these laws can't be ignored and they can't be bypassed.

So in these messages on fellowship I have been seeking to lay for you the grounds of fellowship, the direction of fellowship, the means of fellowship, the restrictions on fellowship, and today the word itself is before us, sharing. Just sharing. For this is what we have reference to when we speak of communion.

When you gather around the table as we did last Lord's Day, I believe it was, we had the elements before us we shared, a common loaf that had been broken, a common cup that was shared. We were sharing together, not only in the elements but in the testimony. We were declaring by our remaining after others had left that we were here, some of course would have but had other commitments and responsibilities, but at least our presence here said we were sinners.

We were sinners that had discovered our sin and had come to abhor and detest our sin, loathed it, and had because of it fled to the foot of the cross. There we saw the Lord Jesus Christ dying for sinners, dying for the ungodly, and we had acknowledged ourselves to be sinners, we had acknowledged ourselves to be worthy of condemnation, and we had received Christ. We testified to this when we sat here and received the loaf, the bed of bread, and the cup.

We testified that we not only were sinners that had fled to a Savior, but we testified that the Savior had availed to wash away our sin. We were here. We were here because we had the inner assurance given by the Holy Ghost that the blood of Christ had been efficacious, it had been effective in washing away our sin.

With this, our presence here testified that we shared the assurance of forgiveness, we shared the certainty of it, we knew that we had been pardoned, we knew that we had been washed from our guilt and from the stains of the past. Furthermore, we shared our common conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again, for till he come we will engage thus, till he take us or till he come. And so by our meeting together around the table of the Lord, we declared again that he is coming, we're looking for him to come, we're yearning for him to come, we're hoping for him to come, we trust he'll come before the meeting's over, we'll trust he'll come before the day is through, before the week has passed, before the month is written, or the year has run its course.

We want to see him, we're looking for him, we're longing to see him. He's our righteousness, our joy, our delight, he's the altogether lovely one, and we're yearning to see him. This is what we shared as we sat together around the table of the Lord.

Then we shared also responsibility. We declared by our presence here that to make known the Lord Jesus Christ was our common task. We couldn't hire it done by sending missionaries.

We couldn't hire it done by employing people to work for the Church. We were, each of us accepting the responsibility when we took the token of bread and of the cup, saying that it is my personal responsibility to witness to those to whom I am able concerning the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, this is the Church in its meeting, this is the Church in its sharing.

But you see, thus far there's no problem, thus far there's no difficulty. Where the problem becomes more personal, and it's easy for all of us to say, yes, isn't this lovely, this is what we did when we were here, we didn't realize we were doing all of that. But if you say we did, we did.

And so we'll be back next, the first Sunday in February, and we'll have the same service of communion and fellowship and sharing. But you see, you can't project sharing into an occasion. It is true that this is what's implied, this is what we understand by the communion service.

But it's more than that. There are several things we have to share that are extremely difficult. One is we have to share our ignorance.

And of course this is extremely hard for us. Living as we do in a culture and a civilization that almost insists that everyone claim omnipotent, omniscience, whether they possess it or not, it's extremely difficult for us to admit that we're ignorant. But this is the case.

You know, many people in a Bible study, I've seen this at home, in homes groups, they would rather pretend that they knew the Scripture than to reveal the fact that they don't know where to find it. And so asked in a Bible study, would you please turn to Hezekiah, the third chapter, you know, they'll look and say, I know the Scripture, it's all right, I won't turn. And they couldn't find, of course, that isn't there.

But the point I'm making is that they are unwilling to show their ignorance, absolutely unwilling. I've said in the past that one of the hardest words for us, especially we Americans, to say is, I don't know, teach me. But it's absolutely necessary for us to share our ignorance.

And I believe that this was one of the functions of the church, that we understand, of course, that we speak a language, just our common ecclesiastical language that isn't understood by the uninitiated, the unsaved, the people in the world. Fortunately, in America, there's still a residue of our population that have grown up in church. We would call them the religious pagans that know some of the terminology.

Unfortunately, often they've just been inoculated by enough indifference so that they do not know what it means and pretend they do and don't want to learn further. But we are rapidly becoming an out-and-out pagan nation, where more and more people are ignoring the church. And with half of the people in the United States, very nearly half now, nearly 90 million, who are affiliated with no synagogue, no Catholic church, Protestant church, or religious cult, you can understand that one out of two people that you would be apt to meet will be utterly oblivious to all the terminology of the Scripture.

And therefore, being educated people, informed people, and living in this land of the high degree of literacy, they're going to try to prove to you that the Bible is irrelevant, and that it has no meaning to them, because otherwise they'd have to admit that a large segment of human knowledge and experience is closed to them. So the unsaved find it extremely difficult to talk with you because they are so ignorant of the Bible and its teachings and its simple truths. They just don't know.

We tell stories about the ignorance of children, but it becomes somewhat pathetic when this is carried right on into adult life, and so it is. And thus, when you talk with many people and begin to use words that aren't understood by them, they're going to become resentful of the fact that they think you're trying to embarrass them. It seems to me that it behooves every one of us as Christians, therefore, to take cognizance of the fact that sinners are ignorant of the Bible and not to talk about redemption.

It's a wonderful word to you because you're redeemed, but it doesn't mean anything. All they can think of is S&H stamps in a store with premiums in it when you talk of redemption, because this is the whole concept they have. They've had no other communication with the word.

Salvation is another word. Wonderful to you, but it has no meaning to them. Repentance, again.

This is a language that's not understood by the people of the street, and therefore, if it's your desire to share Christ with an ignorant generation of sinners, it's necessary for you to learn their language. When we go to the Africa, we learn the language, as my wife and I sought to do. It would have been just as foolish for me to have gotten up in front of the people and preached in English as it would be often for you to simply use the terms that are so familiar to you and meaningful to you in trying to talk to a people, a generation of sinners that have no comprehension of the meaning of those words, and one word is enough to get them to lose all contact with what you're saying.

Someone said to me about the fact that a person can often speak English, so it sounds incomprehensible. Well, if this is true, and it is, then it's equally true that if you use terms that are unknown to the people, you are depriving them of the message, and they are going to resent you because you are embarrassing them, displaying their ignorance and bringing it out to the fore. It's so much better for you to learn to talk in the simple, basic English and convey what you mean in a manner that can be understood so that you can establish communication.

So our sharing has to be on the level of the ability of the person with whom we're sharing to understand and profit from what we're giving. By the same token, we must remember that when a sinner is born of God, he's born as a babe. That one that has passed from death to life through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ has a new heart, has a new spirit.

We trust and believe a new nature, but he still has the old fabric of thinking and the old structure of thought, and he still has the old vocabulary, and he still has the ignorance of doctrine with which he came into the Christian life. And thus, one of the responsibilities of every Christian is to be able to share the truths that have become real to them with someone to whom they've not yet become real. Let me explain more perfectly what I mean.

If God has made real to your heart as a child of him some aspect of the Christian life, you ought immediately endeavor to communicate that to someone else. I would go so far as to say that when Laubach established the each-one-teach-one procedure, by which literacy has come to so many lands deprived of it for generations, you know, Frank Laubach has said that you couldn't have the second lesson in learning to read until you taught someone the first lesson. And this became an excellent means of bringing whole communities into an understanding of the mystery of reading.

I remember seeing people out in our tribe put the paper up and say, you look at it and you can read. I even put it to my ear. I can't hear it say anything.

How do you know that that paper is saying what you said it did? It doesn't say anything to me. Reading was an utter mystery to them. The impressions, black on white, was simply dirt that had been haphazardly distributed.

It had no meaning whatever. And so Frank Laubach devised this means whereby simple lessons, 15 to 20 minutes, would allow one to master the first. He had begun to make sense out of it, the use of a picture and the sound and so on associated with the picture.

Now, he said, if you want the second lesson, you go and teach someone the first. And so he came back and said, now I've taught in the first, prove it to him, and then they would get the second. And it became each one teach one matter.

It is my conviction, it has grown deeper as the days have passed, I stand almost vehemently on it today, that this is the means that God has wanted truth to get back into the family of men again. Not something that I am, you say, oh listen to him preach, or isn't that something, some, we bring some speaker in before, my, yes he's sharing what he's had, but what are you doing with what you've received from him? It's your responsibility to share what has been shared with you. It's your responsibility to communicate that which has been communicated to you.

You say, well they aren't interested. Well, you were interested enough to come and let him share with you. Certainly, if there were several in the same situation, you would believe that there were others that might have been interested that couldn't have come, or didn't know about it.

And if you'll be on the lookout for those, for such, you can say, well now you weren't able to go, but I would just love to tell you what he, and I made some notes, it won't, and let me, let me explain it to you. And you know what you're going to discover? The moment that you begin to share that you only heard about one-fifth of what was said, and only comprehended about one fraction of what was presented. Oh, the very best way in the world to get into your heart a hunger for the word of God is to force you to communicate what you heard with someone else.

Sharing is the principle. Each one teach one, wasn't an invention of Laubach, it's the simple basic premise of the word of God that had been long submerged because of the influence of Rome that attached everything to a priestly class, and hired it done, and the people were to remain in ignorance and depend upon the priesthood. But the word of God has made it perfectly clear that the vigor of the early church came from the fact that everyone that received anything went out and gave it away, and it wasn't theirs until they'd given it.

And if you want to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, you're going to have to recognize that it's imperative upon you that you share what you have. It isn't yours until you've done it. And thus, if you will realize that when a person is born of God, for the most part, born almost totally ignorant of the word of God, and your responsibility is to find that person, and to begin to communicate as best you're able the truth that's there.

The church recognized this 2,000, 1,500, 1,800 years ago, and so established the procedure that continues to the present. You understand that it's tradition in the certain of the so-called apostolic churches or early churches, historical churches, to have godparents at the time of the christening of the child. We do not believe that the christening was the earliest means of baptism.

It grew up afterwards, but nevertheless they recognized that it was necessary for children to do it, and so it followed on through after Augustine, but before Augustine. Back in the first hundred years of the church's history, they appointed godparents, because people were being brought through the testimony of some to a knowledge of Christ, and into the church. But what did they know about it? They knew that Christ was alive from the dead.

They knew he'd come into their heart. They knew they were pardoned. They knew that they were different.

But the Lord Jesus had said, Go ye therefore, teaching them, baptizing them, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. So as the church began rapidly to expand, the local leadership would say, Now, here is this person that's just come to Christ. We're appointing you to brother and sister so-and-so.

They will be your godparents. And then it was the responsibility of the brother and sister to take the babe in Christ and teach them, instruct them, and lead them. When the time came for presentation for baptism, it was the chagrin and grief of the godparents if the babe in Christ wasn't accepted.

It wasn't the babe's fault. It was the parents' fault. And of course, it degenerated through the passing of the centuries to a formality and a nicety.

But nevertheless, it had its origin in a need. And I believe it's the intent of the Spirit of God for you to realize that a church, when it is what God intends it to be, is made up of a company of people that have not only shared a conviction concerning Christ and a relationship with Christ, but they've also shared a responsibility. Everyone equally shares it.

It's just as much your responsibility to witness for Christ as it is mine. It's just as much your responsibility to pray for the lost as it is mine. It's just as much your responsibility to point people to the Lord Jesus Christ as it is mine.

You say, well, what are we paying you for? I am hereby, if I understand the place in the scripture for a specific task, and all pastors in the same task, it is that the Lord intended some were to be given by the head, Christ, to the church as teachers. We behold from Ephesians 4 that he gave evangelists, that's the pioneer missionary, and pastors, that's the total eldership, and teachers, the elders that had the gift and the acceptance of it for the specific intent of opening the word formally and instructing the people. And such were said to be worthy of double honor and released for the ministry of the word in prayer.

But just as all elders were to do pastoral work, so all members were to do the work of the ministry. Every single Christian, everyone born of God, was to be a witness for Jesus Christ. Praying for the lost, opening the word to the lost, finding out where they are, and seeking to bring them on step by step until they come into a good hope in Jesus Christ.

This is his intent and his purpose. The sharing was not to be done by some to the many, and by that some on the other side back to others, but it was truth communicated to you, received by you, assimilated by you, becoming part of the fabric and structure of your mind and heart and life, then being communicated outside. You gossiping the gospel, and in conversation, interesting people in Christ.

This is not only the purpose of all instruction that is to be given, but it is also the purpose of all empowerment that's to be given. We find our Lord Jesus saying concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, ye shall receive power and ye shall be witnesses unto me,

both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the outermost part of the earth. Here the work of the Holy Ghost empowering was for the purpose to enable your sharing.

This is as clear as anything can be in the word of God, that God gave to you not only the word to fit your mind and your tongue, but the power of the Holy Ghost to quicken your mind to learn truth, and quicken your heart to experience truth, and quicken your utterance so that the word would become effective in those in those to whom you shared it, with whom you shared it. It is thus that we must understand that the work of the power, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the power of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, all the enablings of God, are expressly given to fit you for the sharing responsibility that God has given you. So that you aren't doing it in your own energy, you aren't doing it in the paucity of your own zeal.

You say, well I I'm timid, God knew that, the Holy Ghost isn't. I am slow at learning, God knew that, and the Holy Spirit isn't. Well I have a tendency to become argumentative when someone disagrees with me, God knew that but the Holy Spirit isn't.

And so you were to come to the place that you recognized that the resources weren't essentially of you, but were just the vehicle, and that he would give himself and he would become the omnipotent one, empowering you, so that in your timidity he would be your boldness, and in your slowness of learning he would be your quickness, and in your belligerency of spirit he would be your patience, and he would be the enabling one, and thus the sharing ministry that was to be carried on by you was to be carried on in the power of the Holy Ghost. After that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, ye shall receive dunamis, not some explosive thing manifest only in a gift or an experience, but the word dunamis is that sustained energy as coming from a dynamo, for the root of it is more in the concept of a dynamo that continuously produces for all the needs that are to occur, rather than dynamite which is an explosion and the power is expended in one burst. Being filled with the Spirit of God therefore was to relate you and me to God's omnipotence, so that he could translate his power into our weakness, so that he could translate his testimony through our frailty.

And if we understand this and realize this, then we realize that all of the sanctifying grace of God, all the empowering of the Spirit of God, everything that he does in the believer is to the end of preparing and equipping you. Now men are to give you the truth, for he's entrusted this. He has said that we are to teach them to observe all things, and he's given teachers to the church.

But it is one thing to have been taught, and it's another thing to use what you've been taught. And it is only the presence and person of the Spirit of God that will enable you to use to the full the teaching that you've received. And thus he has made himself available.

You say well I'm not filled with the Spirit, I know, but God's done everything necessary so that you could be. He's made full provision so that you could be. You ought to be, and all that isn't being done is chargeable to you, because you aren't.

And all that could have been done is chargeable to you, because you aren't. Because this is his norm, and this is his purpose, and this is what he's intended. You see, sharing therefore has become the responsibility of every Christian.

When someone, it's so ridiculous it hardly bears repeating, but I repeat it nonetheless, one person has said, you know my favorite verse in the scripture is, we shall be carried to heaven on flowery beds of ease. And of course this is a complete travesty of the hymn and of the scripture, but undoubtedly it is more or

less a picture of the attitude of many a Christian, that the whole purpose of God's grace is to relieve them from strain, and from frustration, and from difficulty. I don't know where this came from.

We put such a great premium on peace today. Sometime they're going to give children when they're born an injection of tranquilizer, and they'll just lay on a neat shelf, never troubled, never disturbed, but never amount to anything anyway. I believe if I understand the scripture that there are great conflicts in your own heart, and great conflicts with the world, and the flesh, and the devil, and he's called us to be good soldiers, and fight the good fight of faith.

And I think sometimes we put a little too high premium on a peace that could degenerate into sort of a just a whirl of gray fog. No, no. God has involved us in life.

He's involved us in a relationship with the powers of darkness. He's involved us with a relationship to men and women that are slowly walking toward the crumbling edge of time, and plunging off into a Christless eternity. And there's going to be conflict, and there's going to be difficulty, and the fullness of the Holy Spirit isn't just to bring a kind of a supercharged peace of mind, and a complete disassociation from life, not at all.

But he's told to relate us to his own omnipotence, that we become the instruments and the vehicles for the vigorous, fruitful, effective, and useful testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. Charing, therefore, is to be a matter of personal responsibility. But you say, well does this relate to the text? Paul understood these things of Christ, he met Christ, he had the benefit of teaching in the church, and experience with the Holy Spirit, and then he got to the task.

He got to the work, and he did the thing that was said before him to do. The church sent him out, they prayed for him, and it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us, said the church, that we should separate Saul and Barnabas and send them. And so we read, and when they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

The church was the place where God put his seal on them for particular service, instructed them in that service, and equipped them for that service. And they had accepted the responsibility and performed it. They had done the thing that was at their hand to do.

Someone says to ascend by an unfaithful servant, someone that accepts responsibility, someone that commits themselves to a task and doesn't do it, is like walking with your foot out of joint. You may get there, but oh it's a crippling experience. And so it is that the Spirit of God says they had committed themselves to the work of God, for by the grace of God, and they had fulfilled it.

This is a responsibility of sharing that which is given to us of God, and carrying the responsibility by his power, his enabling, and his guidance. But something else we find. Not only had they fulfilled the task which they had accepted as from the Lord in the presence of the church, but they had also rehearsed all that God had done with them.

When I saw that little word with, my heart leaped. It stood up out of the page. They rehearsed all that God had done with them.

They were laborers together with God. They had fulfilled the task, yes, but God had worked with them. So in your Sunday school ministry, in your personal witness, in your home class ministry, in anything you do, you have to accept the responsibility, and then God gives you all the grace and needed provision, whether

it be for wisdom or power, whatever it may be, for the fruit of the Spirit and the enabling, he works with you.

How marvelous it is as you anticipate as a church family, as deaconesses and deacons and elders, a year of responsibility, sharing with the body of Christ the particular tasks that will confront you, that you should accept them as from the Lord. You should accept them on the foundation of the word of God, and you should accept them with the calm confidence that recommended by, to God for the work which has been committed, that God is prepared to work with you. It'd be extremely lonely if he were.

It would be extremely difficult if it weren't. But I think something further, that there ought to be far more than there is opportunity for sharing on the part of the people what the Lord does. And so I would say to you today that I believe that it is in the mind and will and purpose of God for us as a church this year to seek new ways from him, proved by eldership and guided by the Lord, whereby we can share both our ignorance and our need and our failure and our victories and our triumph.

For if you were to write one word over the church and have its significance inexhaustible, it would be fellowship. You might put the synonyms participation, communion, sharing. But God knew our need for each other.

And your failure may keep another from failing, and your victory may encourage another to lay hold of the Lord. God's answer of prayer for you may be but what is needed to encourage another to take hold of the extended hand of his grace. Sharing.

They rehearsed together all that God had done with them. Mine had come to pass that we shall accept all the aspects of this wonderful word as it pertains to us as a people, as we anticipate our Wednesday night, our annual meeting, and the year of activity and ministry and service that lies before us. And so it would be that we too could rehearse, not with one another, but when we see him face to face, that which had been done.

Saying with the Apostle Paul, I fought a good fight. I've kept the faith. I've finished the course.

Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at his appearing. And not to me only, but all them who love his appearing. Might it be that that rehearsing of what is done that we seek may not be in the ears necessarily of one another, though it should be there.

But to hear him in that day as he receives us saying good and faithful service, well done. We'll share together now in danger and difficulty and duty. We might share together then in joy and delight.

And in that one, the thing that we see just is well done. Shall we bow our hearts? Our Heavenly Father, we're men and women, young people in this pilgrim's. We look back on the failures and the victories of the past year.

And we realize that thou art God of the future and the future is known to thee. And now Lord, we anticipate an annual meeting. We anticipate a gathering together, a recommending of the church to its own people concerning certain responsible individuals to accept tasks and labors from thee.

Oh God of grace, give us wisdom. Teach us the meaning of sharing. Teach us the meaning of fellowship.

And we ask thee that in this year that comes thou would lead us into a far warmer, richer, more personal and vital kind of fellowship in victories and triumphs and needs and failures than we've ever known in the past. May this be a year marked by the word fellowship becoming more meaningful to us than it ever has been in the past. For Jesus' sake, amen.

Let us stand together for the benediction. Now may the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be the glory now and forever. Amen.

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