

Outside The Box Series

Lesson 4 of 8

Outside The Box Friendships

We've been talking about the Out Of The Box Church!

- We knew when we started this church that it would not be a traditional church.
- Our desire was to build a church that without walls or restraints would reach its community and advance the Kingdom of God globally.

I want to belong to an Out Of The Box Church, how about you?

- For years I have heard people say, "I wish we could get our church outside of these 4 walls."
- It is our desire to do exactly that.
- Whatever we have to do...

Today we are talking about Out Of The Box Friendships.

We are so glad to have all of our friends here today.

- We purposely called today's service "Friend Day", because we wanted those of you who are our guests today to know that you are our friends and how important you are to us.

Proverbs 18:24

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

In the world that we live in, good friendships are hard to find.

- Technology is constantly causing our interactions with other people to become less and less authentic.

- Things like email and texting and Facebook allow us to communicate with our friends, but they do not allow us the opportunity for face-to-face conversation and companionship.

While these modern day ways of communicating are convenient, they can never take the place of real people connecting with real people face to face.

Strong relationships are usually forged through adversity.

- As with most anything, fire causes things to be tempered and strengthened.
- Steel becomes hardened only after it has been heated and cooled repeatedly.
- In the same sense relationships that have endured hardship are most often the strongest of relationships.

The friendships in this room that have the strongest relationships have probably been through a few things together.

- Friends care about you.
- Friends will share something they enjoy with you.
- They will introduce you to people who can help you.

The reason many of you are here today is because someone thought enough of you that they wanted to share this service with you today.

- They have found something good.
- They have found something that makes sense.
- They have found something that has helped them.
- And they wanted to share it with you today.
- You mean something to them.
- They care about you.
- They are concerned about you.
- You are their friend!

Most often in a church, people become casual friends.

- They shake hands and greet one another but very often do not have a connection the rest of the week.

While these people share an intimate experience each week as they worship God together, they most often know very little about what is going on in the other people's lives the rest of the week.

- The hardships and trials most of us endure throughout the week are too often unknown to the rest of us.
- We fail to pray for one another because we do not truly know what it is that so many of us are going through in our families, jobs and circumstances.

Most churches create casual relationships,

But here, we work hard to create close relationships between members that would cause help and encouragement to develop between one another.

- This is why one of the first things we did was bring on staff a full time Youth Pastor.
- This is why we asked Amber and Andy to head up our College and Career ministry.
- This is why we are beginning to put together our Care Ministry.
- We don't want casual relationships here...
- We don't want handshakes and smiles alone...
- We want to develop genuine Out of the Box relationships.

The strongest families are families who have the strongest relationships.

- And the strongest Churches are the Churches who have the closest relationships.

We cannot be an Outside the Box church if all we have are casual

relationships.

- We've got to get to know one another.
- We have to help one another.
- We've got to learn to love one another.
- Why would I help you if I do not Love you, and how can I love you if I do not know you?

A church that has only casual relationships will not reach its community.

- It will not care about the needs of those who look to it for direction and help.

Church should be the first place a family thinks of when they are struggling with their relationships.

- Healing should come from the church.
- Help should come from the church.
- Spiritual guidance should come from the church.

It's a shame when the only spiritual guidance many people get comes from some TV show they just watched.

- Church should be the place where families and communities come together to support, encourage and love one another.

A dysfunctional church will create dysfunctional families and dysfunctional families create dysfunctional communities.

- Help, healing, spiritual guidance, and a relationship with Jesus Christ starts here!
- This IS the Church of the Living God and He desires to have relationship with you and I.

James 2:23

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

What an amazing thing to be called...
“A Friend Of God”

How does someone become a friend of God?

- Well, it doesn't happen by staying home on Sunday mornings, I'll tell you that.
- It starts like any relationship, with an introduction...

John 1: 45

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Have you ever heard someone say something like that about church or God?

- What good is there in going to church?
- Why would I want to go there?
- What's so big about God?

“Come and See!!!

- As hard as you try, you'll never be able to explain to people all that God can do for them.
 - You just need to get them here.
 - “Come check it out!”
 - “See for yourself”
-
- I've had a lot of people tell me that the roof of the church would fall in if they came to church, but I have yet to see a roof fall in.

I have found as many of the people who come here have found that God is and can be an amazing friend to have.

- There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother and his name is Jesus Christ.
- He is there all the time.
- He doesn't mind you calling him up in the middle of the night to tell him your problems.
- He is concerned about your job and your family and the things that you are concerned about.
- He invites us all to ask anything...

Luke 11:9

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

“Anything you need!”

Sounds like a few good friends I've had in my life.

- Hey Jim if you need something, just call.
- Hey anything you need, just ask.
- Whatever I can do to help, just let me know...

Jesus says to you and I today, ask and it shall be given to you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.

It really is amazing what kind of friendship that God wants to have with you and I.

- We may not deserve His friendship...
- We may not want His friendship...
- We may not think we are worthy of it,
- But Jesus wants to have a relationship with you and I that is outside the box.
- One that is not a casual friendship.

- One that is not self serving
- One that helps and encourages and blesses