**Characteristics of a Healthy Church Series:**

**Healthy Churches are United in Prayer, Partnership and Unity Rev. Tom Parrish**

 **Essential Question:**

**How do healthy churches stay united reflecting**

**the reality of Jesus among us?**

**EVERY CHURCH WANTS UNITY, FEW CHURCHES EXPERIENCE UNITY.** Why? Most of us misunderstand the real source of unity and what we are suppose to do in response.

**First: Corporate Prayer and Fasting**

***1 Corinthians 7:5 Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.***

Simple: We want to be able to ***“hear together, perceive together, understand together, be impacted together, recognize together” from the Lord Jesus*** so that we can put his mind and will to work right here!

**I believe that biblical fasting is one of the most misunderstood teachings of the Bible? What do I mean by that? Fasting is not being deprived of food. Fasting gives us the time to hear and see Jesus.**

**SECOND: BIBLICAL PARTNERSHIP**

***Philippians 1: I thank my God every time I remember you. In every prayer for all of you, I always pray with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.***

***The Buck Stops Here!* President Harry Truman.**

Why would St. Paul use the term “partnership” with the Philippians?

Partnership means; equal responsibility and outcome.

Partnership means we are all in this together and Jesus empowers us and holds all of us accountable for taking responsivity and outcome for his mission.

**What does this mean for us?** As a believer in Jesus Christ we cannot hire someone to take our responsibility.As a believer in Jesus Christ we cannot expect someone else to do it.As a believer in Jesus Christ we cannot claim we are not gifted or called to the ministry.

**Partnership means** you are just as responsible as me, or the elders or the staff, or the council for the unity, harmony, mission and discipleship of this church.

**THIS IS JESUS’ EXPECTATION OF ALL OF US…NO EXCEPTIONS!**

**THIS LEADS US DIRECTLY TO OUR** **THIRD REALITY: UNITY IN JESUS**

***1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.***

**THE SEVEN PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS IN JESUS THAT ARE ESSENTIAL:**

**Faithfulness:** I will be faithful to my fellow believers in the church at all times in all circumstances.

**Patience:** I will not try to change things about my brothers and sisters in Christ that I do not like but will modify any of my behaviors that annoy them.

**Forgiveness:** When I have offended my fellow believer, I will quickly ask for forgiveness, and I will forgive my brother or sister in Christ’s their offenses toward me even before being asked.

**Support / service:** I will anticipate my fellow believers spiritual, emotional, physical and material needs and will do everything I can to meet them.Acts 2:44-45 ***And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.***

**Respect:** I will not act or speak in a way that ridicules or embarrasses my fellow believer.No name calling, no gossip, no slander, ever!

**Kindness:** I will be kind to my brothers and sister in Christ, eliminating any trace of meanness from my behavior and speech.

**Appreciation / Celebration:** I will appreciate my fellow believers gifts and attributes and celebrate them personally and publicly.

**What would happen to any church that lived by these seven agreements?** We would see the power of Jesus unleashed in us and in the church in ways we never imagined. Miracles, signs and wonders would be normal!

**AS the old saying goes: *Is there enough evidence to convict you and me in a jury of law of truly being followers of Jesus Christ?***

Healthy Churches do it in three ways: **They are locked together in Prayer, Partnership, and Unity.**

Today we have a choice: Do we submit to Jesus and be healthy or not?

The world around us is continually looking at you and me to determine if there is enough evidence to convict us of being followers of Jesus.