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God's Design For Church Health "Appreciating The Body"

Intro: Video: Time to Serve God. Today, we are here to appreciate those in our church family who know church is not all about them and they have made the time to serve God and invest in the lives of others. They are making a difference!

Appreciate: To recognize the quality; significance; or magnitude. This is what we want to do today. We want to recognize the significance of those who serve and the magnitude of the difference they make! This can't be a once a year thing. Appreciation must be daily.

- There are 3 keys areas we need to continually appreciate that will keep the church body healthy, running smoothly, and people feeling good about their serving.

I. Appreciate The Variety Of Body Parts That Make Up The Church

I Cor. 12:18-20 "But God has made our bodies with many parts, and He has put each part just where He wants it. What a strange thing a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts but only one body." (NLT)

- Explain analogy of physical body with the body of Christ = the Church.
- A. Practice appreciating the differences (Not easy)
1. Sometimes, it's the differences in others that irritate us. They don't think the same way / value the same things / their priorities are different than ours, and sometimes this is irritating.
 2. There is this phrase that we learned in our "Love and Respect" class that I feel applies here very well. Sometimes in a marriage it's the differences that grind on us. So, there is a phrase we use. "Not wrong, just different."
 3. This phrase needs to be applied when it comes to the church and all the differences represented in it. "Not wrong, just different".
 4. We can be irritated with one another or we can choose to appreciate the differences and the variety that makes up the body. It's a choice.
 5. For example: We're all wired so uniquely. We all don't share the same passions / gifts / personalities. Even as a staff, if you look at all of us, we are all very different.
 6. I don't want to surround myself with people who are just like me. (Talk about stressing the church out!). I want people who are different than I am.

- Pastor Dave: He is wired with greater Shepherding gifts than me. – He is more emotionally constant / He runs on Africa time / -
 - Charla: She is wired to be much more organization than I am / much more multi-task – And a lot sweeter / Lost without her.
 - Sam: Sam is just so relational and tuned in to the needs of people more than I am. I usually focus on the task first. Sam focuses on the person.
 - Jeff Paterson: This is one of the biggest reasons I want Jeff here. He is different than anyone we have on staff. Very organized - meticulous/ has gifts and passions in teaching / likes technology / I tolerate it.
7. All these difference must be appreciated. What helps us do this is...

B. Practice remembering it is God who created the variety in His church.

“But God made...He has put each part just where He wants it...”

1. Remembering that God has designed the church for variety helps me appreciate all the differences. If I forget it was God who created the differences, I start thinking everyone should be normal like me!
2. If the person sitting next to you irritates you...blame God. He made them that way! He designed them to be different / unique / one of a kind.
3. God is the architect and builder of His church. He knows that variety is necessary in order for the church to become all that He desires it to be.
4. Consider a beautiful painting. What makes it valuable and beautiful is not that the artist used the same color, but uses a variety of colors with incredible skill that creates a priceless work of art.
5. This is what God is doing in the church. You may not appreciate the color that you see, but you must remember that it is simply part of a grand work of art that God is creating.
6. We don't get to see the finished product in this life. We see glimpses of it. We'll get to see it someday. But in the meantime, we need to trust God is what He's doing and appreciate the colors we don't think are necessary.
 - Let's appreciate the variety!

II. Appreciate The Body Parts That Seem Less Important In The Church

I Cor. 12:22, 25 “In fact, some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary...This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other equally.” (NLT)

A. We need to appreciate those people who are not in the spotlight

1. There are just some ministries / areas of service that are more public / upfront and in the spotlight. (Worship team / teacher / home group leader / pastor / - certain roles people just notice more.)
2. There are other ministries / roles that bless the church immensely, but hardly get noticed or acknowledged. (Bulletin folders-stuffers / people who bring

cookies / TLC / Web team / someone who takes care of the indoor plants...and many other roles like this – not in the spotlight – necessary!

3. I want to encourage you all to stop and think about all the things that take place here at Foothills and appreciate the hundreds of people who make it happen every week.
4. If you feel like you have an insignificant role here at Foothills I want you to know that it is necessary...it matters...it makes a difference. If you know someone who is doing something here at church, thank them! Tell them you appreciate them.
5. If there is something here at Foothills you appreciate, find out who is responsible for it and purposely thank them. (Call the office this week / Go to the web site / ask someone!)

B. We need to show the same appreciation regardless of position

1. When we show the same appreciation for each part, the result is harmony in the church. (*This makes for harmony*) Explain Harmony: Harmony in music is the result of different notes / pitches working together in unity creating something pleasant to the ears.
2. All the notes are important. In fact, they depend upon each other. They are interdependent on each other in order to create harmony.
 - **Illustrate**: Video from 301 class.
3. When we show the same appreciation for every gift and role in the church, the result is church harmony. Something is created that is very pleasant to the Lord Jesus and to us.
4. It's tough to have harmony in the church if you feel like you're taken for granted and underappreciated for your contribution. If you feel like no body cares or notices what you do.
5. This is something we all must embrace a responsibility for. It's impossible for me to get to every person in ministry and personally show appreciation for everything that takes place. I try to make the effort, but it takes all of us.
6. I guarantee you that we have people in ministry thinking about quitting because they are convinced nobody cares or notices. Ministry can be discouraging / lonely place at times.
7. You could be the reason someone doesn't quit! Will we embrace this role? Not just being thankful for the things that are obvious, but showing appreciation for those roles that aren't? (children's workers / nursery / pre-school / food / bulletin /

III. Appreciate The Absolute Necessity Of Each Body Part Within The Church

I Cor. 12:27 "Now all of you together are Christ's body, and each one of you is a separate and necessary part of it."

A. Your gift is irreplaceable

(Say this out loud / now tell the person sitting next to you they are irreplaceable!)

1. Could we find someone else to do your job or ministry. Yes. BUT, we could never find someone to do it like you...to fulfill a ministry in the way God designed you to do it.
2. You provide something to Foothills that cannot be provided by anyone else on the planet. Your uniqueness is irreplaceable. You are not an optional part of the church. You are a necessary part of it according to God.
3. Some people look at themselves like the human appendix / tonsils...something that has a function, but you can live without it. This is simply not true. God doesn't have any unnecessary parts in His church.
4. Here's why...

B. The result of every part functioning is irreplaceable

Eph. 4:16 "Under His direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love." (NLT)

- What is the result when we all function in the way God designed us to function? Notice the 3 results
 1. We help the other parts grow. We influence other parts of the body! Your gifts / talents / contribution have an impact on my life. Your gifts make me better / your gifts support my gifts / our gifts were designed to work together.
 - We need to not just appreciate the tasks that are done in the church, but how other people's gifts and ministries impact our personal lives. Have you thanked someone for this?
 2. The body (church) will be healthy: If you only have 50% of your body parts functioning, you're probably not long for this world. You are pretty unhealthy. So it is with the church. The more people serve the healthier the body is.
 - If you are serving at Foothills, you are directly responsible for keeping this a healthy place. Thank you!
 3. The church will be full of love. When people are serving, growing and becoming healthy, the church is full of love. WHY? Because when people feel overworked and underappreciated, they don't feel loved.
 - When there are many hands doing the work, no one feels overwhelmed with the responsibility. When the work load is shared there is camaraderie and joy in serving together.
 - Therefore, the more people get involved and serve, the more loving the church will become. What makes a church a loving place is not another message on love. It's the church committed to serving in love.

Today, we want to appreciate those who are serving in love here at Foothills. I want you to know how much I appreciate you and what joy you bring to my heart. It's impossible for us to mention every person who serves by name. What we are going to do is acknowledge each ministry leader by name and then have any of their team members stand who serve in that area of ministry. This also gives everyone an opportunity to see who serves where and to personally go up to them and say "thank you, I appreciate you!" This is your assignment...to express your appreciation today. Maybe even tell them specifically what it is that you appreciate about them and what they do.