

INTRO

- Who was your best friend when you were 5? 10? 15?

In our summer series, ekklesia, we are looking at what the early church devoted themselves to then in order to consider what the church should devote herself to now.

READ

Acts 2:42-47

Beginning in Acts 1, the believers were together. They were devoted: to the word (hearing, understanding, doing), to fellowship, communion, prayer, meeting one another's needs, meals together, big groups and small. To relationships.

REFLECT & RESPOND

In his recent book "At Your Best", reflecting on the research and writing of British Anthropologist and Psychologist Robin Dunbar, Carey Nieuwhof writes:

"It appears that you and I are designed to process only a limited number of meaningful relationships which has some pretty staggering implications for how we live these days."

"The struggle then is between design and desire. You were designed to handle between three and one hundred and fifty in a meaningful way."

Consider the relationships of Jesus:**Seventy**

— Luke 10

Twelve +

— Luke 8

Twelve

— Luke 6

Three

— Mark 9, Mark 14

One

— John 13, John 21

Though he traveled with a groups, sometimes 12, sometimes 70, even Jesus had only a few friends who seemed to be closest to him: Peter, James and John.

The Book of Proverbs has so many things to say about relationships.

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy. — Proverbs 27:5,6

Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel. — Proverbs 27:9

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. — Proverbs 18:24

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. — Proverbs 17:17

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. — Proverbs 27:17

Qu: Consider your intimate circle of friends — your 3 to 5 closest — not your 12 or your 70 or your Facebook "friends". What characteristics mark these relationships?

Qu: Do words like Insight, Encouragement, Compassion reflect your these relationships? How?

Qu: What are the challenges to 21st Century relationships? Any personal challenges?

PRAY

- That this would be a summer "devoted" to relationship