

Message Title: **'Created to Connect'**  
Scripture Source: **Ephesians 2:13, 18: 4:16**  
Speaker: John Garner  
Date: September 7, 2014

**"One is the loneliest number..."**

We yearn to experience healthy connections with others. Isolation breeds hopelessness. And so we search for meaningful connections that nourish and build us up. Illustrate:

God has 'hard-wired' you and me for life giving and life changing relationships, beginning with Himself. We have been 'created to connect'. This morning, in creative ways, we will examine three realms of connection God has in mind for us, in fact, that God yearns for you and me to experience and share with others. We will discover, maybe for the first time, the significant benefits of participating in God-directed connections. Here are the connections...

1. Connection with God through a relationship with Jesus
2. Connection with fellow Christians
3. Connection with the world around us...starting in our own backyards

Instinctively, what connection do you feel most in need of currently?

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What connection do you need to get serious about? \_\_\_\_\_

Which connection are you most grateful to be experiencing currently? \_\_\_\_\_

**Connection: A Definition**

'Connect: verb: "to join, to link or fasten together; unite or bind...to establish communication between; put in communication, to cause to be associated, from a French word meaning 'to establish a relationship' ...antonym: divide, disassociate"

**It Starts Here: Connection with God through Jesus: Ephesians 2:13, 18**

Your greatest need is to experience a genuine and personal connection with God. The barrier? Sin. Each of us has sinned against God. The penalty of sin is death, both spiritual and physical...separation from God. Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

The 'benefits' of this connection are profound. Forgiveness of sins, a restored relationship with God. The resources of God to live a life marked by purpose, hope, peace, contribution, fulfillment and resilience.

Our Communion service is a wonderful opportunity to understand the love, grace, and passion of Christ...for you, for me. To understand what his sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection 'brings to the table.' Ephesians 2:13, 18...forgiveness and reconciliation through his sin bearing body and shed blood. The penalty has been paid in full, the offer is extended to you and me. Will we trust in who Jesus is and what He did on the Cross on our behalf? Don't miss out on the benefits of this incredible connection! 1 John 1:9

**It is Strengthened Here: Connection with fellow Christ followers: Ephesians 4:16**

We can't thrive and contribute in isolation over the long haul. We need to be participating in healthy and mutually supportive and stimulating relationships with a few fellow Christians. Hebrews 10:24-25

We want to give opportunities for connecting relationally on Sundays and between Sundays...'table times' such as 'Carnival on the Lawn' and 'Guess who's Coming to the table?' The benefits spiritually, emotionally, and practically are significant.

A key opportunity for this kind of interdependent connecting is the 'Journey Group.' Pastor Stephen will share his vision at this time!

**It is Extended...Here and There: Connection with our world through service: Ephesians 2:10, 4:12**

We must be engaged in the complex, uncertain, broken, and beautiful world we are part of. Local churches like RBC must be involved in offering both 'spiritual hope and practical help' in Jesus name. We can't ignore this world, starting with our own neighbours. And, the benefits to others and ourselves are profound...needs met, hope rekindled, comfort offered.

Interview with Project Share

**Responses to these Opportunity for Connection:**

Treasure the Connections: Understand that these connections are God's intentions for each of us. Understand that healthy, interdependent relationships with the church is God's unquenchable passion for each of us and for those yet to come through our doors.

Protect and Strengthen the Connections: In all of life, relational connections can be both incredibly resilient and mysteriously fragile. Dear friends at RBC...choose to protect and strengthen every relationship that makes up RBC. Every single one. How? As the Scriptures direct: nourishing words and constructive actions. Ephesians 4. Read carefully this chapter. Seriously. We each have a part to play in building up this local church. Ephesians 4:29-5:2 Folks, it often comes down to...words and attitudes. Your words, my words. Paul was explicit and bold about this issue with a local church in the first century. 'No 'trash talk' allowed. No complaining and tearing people down. No bullying or demanding one's own way. None of that destructive relational nonsense. Rather, speak words that lift up, that encourage, that foster hope in people's hearts and that reveal none other than the character of the One we choose to follow, Jesus. Speak words that inspire and challenge people to be serious about trusting and obeying Jesus.

Traffic in forgiveness and truth telling. Be marked by honesty and keeping short accounts, with God and each other. The benefits of choosing these kinds of behaviours are profound: relational health, spiritual vitality, the presence and power of God experienced, people coming to faith in Jesus. The beauty of healthy and mature connections is apparent and stirs people's hearts and souls.

Share the Connections with others: who around you needs the connections God aches to offer? Be specific! \_\_\_\_\_

**Assess Your Connectedness**

What realm do you need to understand more fully? \_\_\_\_\_

What realm do you need to engage in more fully? \_\_\_\_\_

How can we help you? Because, together, we can experience richer connectedness, with the attending benefits and the kind of life giving connectedness Jesus had in mind!