

## Why Do We Have A Great Congregation?

➤ **Intro: tone = positive (assume doing)**

- church is the people, congregation

- **lesson:** Why do we have a great congregation? – **pics, because of the people – church is the people**

➤ **Because we're knit together**

- **Col. 2:2a** hearts “knit together” in love = **encouragement**

- **Greek:** *sumbibazo* (soom-bib-ad'-zo) to join together, put together, to unite

- **Greek:** *agape* commitment to do good toward, the component that knits our hearts together

- **illus.:** yarn is **Christians** (break), **love is what knits together, congregation** (not break)

- **many times stronger when knit, stretch** (flexible, longsuffering), **destroy by tearing or cutting** (remove love)

- **We are a great congregation because we love each other (brotherly love)!**

➤ - **Rom. 12:10** devoted to one another, give **preference** to one another

- **devoted:** close love relatives have for one another

- **illus.:** song #643, **God's family – household of God**

- **give preference:** let others lead – **Eph. 5:21** submit to one another

➤ - **2 Pet. 1:7, 8, 10-11** brotherly kindness, love – qualities, fruitful, true knowledge – eternal kingdom

- **brotherly kindness:** love of brothers and sisters

➤ - **1 Jn. 4:7-11** love one another, because God loves us

- **illus:** song #394, **Love One Another**

➤ - **Col. 2:19** “knit together” by holding fast to Christ = **growth**

- **note:** “knit together” (KJ), “held together” (NASB)

- **Col. 2:12-13** baptized, made alive together with Christ - **hold fast to Him**

- **application:**

- **positive:** each person who hold fast to Christ is knit together with brethren

- **negative:** each person who is not knit together with brethren, so not holding fast to Christ

- **we have a great congregation, because each member is holding fast to Christ**

➤ - **Eph. 4:16** “knit together” by each member doing his part = **growth**

- **note:** “knit together” (NKJV), “held together” (NASB)

- **we are a growing congregation, because each member is doing his part – youngest to oldest**

- **illus.:** strong as weakest link — if the young people were not strong, doing their part, we wouldn't have a great congregation

- **illus.:** one mother last week, visited Irene, took food, brushed hair, took out trash, encouraged her and lifted spirits – **others have done the same, called**

- **illus.:** another mother last week, visited Irene with children, lifted her spirits

- **illus.:** another couple last week, visited Irene, cleaned our refrigerator, disposed of old phone books, vacuumed floors

➤ **Because we are knit together in love, holding fast to Christ, and all doing our work:**

- **great assembly:** we worship in spirit and truth, pleasing God, stimulating one another
- - **Jn. 4:24 worship spirit and truth**
- - **Heb. 10:23-25a encouraged, stimulated,** every service
  
- - **great Bible classes:** students and teachers, edifying and education, interesting
  - **1 Tim. 3:15 church, pillar and support of truth,** good congregation wants to be best teachers possible
  - **work teachers** put into classrooms, lessons
- - **pics: classrooms – want to know how good a congregations is, look at the classrooms**
- **work students** put into class: attendance, preparation, participation
  
- - **great young people:** have a great group of young people, keeps the church on fire, fervent, exciting, evangelistic
  - **1 Tim. 4:12 young people very effective working** in kingdom, let no one despise
  - **illus.: Ed,** visited, immediately embraced, had him over to houses and devo, greatly encouraged him, visited two Sundays ago, in town just a few days, drives several miles to get here
  - **illus.: Michael Matthews,** young men's class, young people is what first impressed him – if they have it together, the elders and parents probably have it together
  
- - **great older people:** have a great group of older people doing the work, led by effectual leaders
  - **Tit. 2:2-5 teach and lead,** example, godliness
  - **responsible:** at home and church, follow through with jobs
  
- - **great friendliness:** we are friendly to each others and everyone who comes in
  - **Jn. 13:35 love one another,** men **know Jesus' disciples**
- - **Rom. 16:16 greet, holy,** encouraging, stimulating, uplifting, fun – **many churches not do, fail**
  - **most common comment from visitors, we're friendly** – makes us different
    - **illus.: by the time I meet some of the visitors,** they had several others already meet them and exchange phone numbers, have several members tell be about visitor before I even get back there
  
- - **great social fellowship:** spend time together, encourage through personal interaction
  - **Acts 2:46-47a social interaction** equally important to anything else we do
    - **individual responsibility,** many Christians neglect, then wonder why lose their kids to the world
    - **illus.: Tom and Melanie have church over after young men's class** – \$, **work, time, commitment**
    - **illus.: some of the men went golfing** in the mountains last week
    - **illus.: ladies go out sometimes** – ladies' night out
    - **illus.: young people go out sometimes** – bowling, dinner, movies, etc. – **parents' resp., younger kids**
  - **1 Pet. 4:9 hospitality: qualification of elders - 1 Tim. 3:2**

**Prayer for our congregation**

- ask one of the men to lead prayers

➤ **Summary / Inv.**

- **if not a Christian,** missing out on being a member of the Lord's church, family, a great congregation
- **inv.**