

DATE: March 6, 2011

TEXT: Romans 12: 9-18

TITLE: “COMMUNITY – ‘DOING LIFE TOGETHER’”

SERIES: “The Things That Really Matter” (#7 of 7)

INTRODUCTION:

(*Pictures with these if possible for appropriately putting each prayer up on the screen)

Some kids were asked to write letters to God. Here’s what some of them had to say in the context of their families.

- “Dear GOD, thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.”
- “Dear GOD, did you really mean, ‘do unto others as they do unto you’? Because if you did, then I’m going to fix my brother!”
- “Dear GOD, I bet it is very hard for you to love everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it.”

The Apostle Paul has been writing about the family or community of Christ. He wrote, **“...so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” (Romans 12:5).**

Speaking of community, martyred theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, said, “Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.” According to verse 1, what Paul asks of us is possible by God’s mercy, as we *“offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.”*

Community is at the heart of the church’s identity. Christianity is not something we are to do alone. As followers of Jesus, we have been born into God’s family, and, as members of His family, we belong in relationships with others. We really do need each other. **Author Dr. Eric Sandras observed, “Through the history of the church, genuine spirituality has always been nurtured in the womb of genuine Christian community.”**

In this passage, Paul focuses on several characteristics that are part of a genuine Christian community. He shows us what it takes to do community or, in other words, to do life together.

I. HOW TO DO LIFE TOGETHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

A. (v.9) DO LIFE TOGETHER WITH LOVE THAT IS REAL

“Love must be sincere.”(Romans 12:9a)

1. Love is the foundation for community.
2. In Romans 13:8, the Apostle Paul says to “let no debt remain outstanding except the continuing debt to love one another.”
3. In Romans 13:10, he says, “Love is the fulfillment of the law.”

4. Here in Romans 12, Paul provides insight and guidance concerning the nature of love.
5. Paul writes of the manifestations of love that are real, sincere and genuine.
6. Love that is less than real or sincere is not the love he is speaking about.
7. Paul is referring here to Christian love that comes through Christ.
“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God...” (I John 3:7)
8. It is His love within us.
9. It is love that is sincere, meaning without hypocrisy, or upstaged.
10. Sincere love is not fake, counterfeit, or a mask of pretense, but is rather a sincere expression of one’s intentions.
11. As someone said, “Love that is true does nothing false.”
12. It is love that is real.

ILLUSTRATION: Mart De Haan tells that every day for 20 years, Antonio wrote a love poem to his wife. At a divorce hearing, though, he revealed that he didn’t compose these verses to celebrate the joys of marriage but to pacify his domineering wife. The judge granted the divorce and declared that the marriage had nothing more to it than a “look of love.”

13. God calls us to a love that is real.
14. Love that is real will make a difference in the lives you touch with His love.
15. It takes love that is real to do life together.

B. (v.9) DO LIFE TOGETHER WITH A COMMITMENT TO GOOD

“Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” (Romans 12:9b)

1. The strongest word for evil or wickedness in Greek is used here, telling us evil cannot be ignored.
2. Sincere love is not complacent in the face of wrong, for it hates evil.

“Let those who love the Lord hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.” (Psalm 97:10)

3. Refusing to condemn evil or tolerating evil when we can do something about it is no longer real love.
4. Total commitment to good leaves neither time nor inclination to court evil.
5. Good is to be the lifestyle of the Christian.

“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you do doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” (I Peter 2:12)

6. Genuine love is the real thing that will lead us to do what is good.
7. Through His power, hold tightly to good, allowing no room for evil to creep in.
8. Stand clearly for good as you do life together so all know where you stand.
9. Your stand for good can help others cling to good.
10. It takes a commitment to good to really do life together.

C. (v.10) DO LIFE TOGETHER WITH DEVOTION TO ONE ANOTHER

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.” (Romans 12:10a)

1. Paul defines this love with the word 'brotherly,' which brings that context of family.
2. It describe the love that believers possess for one to another, for even though they were members of different natural families, they were united in Christ and were recipients of family love originating from the Father, who had bestowed His great love on His spiritual children.
3. He also uses the word 'devoted,' which refers to the love of parents for children in the context of family.
4. The word translated 'devoted' occurs only here in the New Testament, but was used in the Greco-Roman world for the tender affections of family life.
5. For Paul, intimate and devoted affection among a healthy family becomes the fitting model for the church.
6. Love is more than a principle we put on a piece of paper; it is passion to be put into practice.

"Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." (I John 4:11)

7. We are to care about one another with devoted and brotherly love.
8. In one sense, we are our brother's keeper.
9. It is more than sharing news, a warm handshake, and a friendly pat on the back.
10. All of this is good, but the New Testament community goes much deeper.
11. Community takes place when we consider how we can lift up, build up, strengthen and brighten up our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**D. (v.10) DO LIFE TOGETHER BY HONORING OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELF
"Honor one another above yourselves." (Romans 12:10b)**

1. God cares about how we treat one another.
2. Literally, this command means 'to lead the way before and so to show deference to the other person.'
3. To honor someone is to show genuine appreciation and admiration for the other individual.
4. Believers who are being transformed by the renewing of their mind should be becoming more and more sensitive to showing respect, to acknowledging the accomplishments of others, to demonstrating genuine love by not being jealous or envious.
5. We cannot afford to loose honor in the body of Christ.
6. It is a call to strive with all our strength to show honor or respect to each other.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves." (Philippians 2:3)

7. Earlier in this chapter, Paul instructed, **"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment..." (Romans 12:3)**
8. The Rule of St. Benedict tried to capture this virtue by receiving all strangers as Christ.
9. It takes honoring others above ourselves to really do community.

E. (v.11) DO LIFE TOGETHER SERVING THE LORD WITH SPIRITUAL FERVOR

“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.”

1. Complacency is the enemy of zeal and spiritual fervor.
2. When we lose zeal, we can get sloppy, unclear and careless.
3. Don't be slow, tardy, slothful, or lazy in your diligence.
4. Paul is warning us against “that attitude which seeks to get by with as little work and inconvenience as possible.”
5. Service to the Lord calls for our best.
6. We are not to remain spectators but servants.
7. Whatever we do, we are to be serving the Lord.

ILLUSTRATION: Someone suggested, “What God knows about us is more important than what people think about us.”

8. God knows if we have a heart to serve Him.
9. When we come together in community, we can accomplish things for the Lord we would never do by ourselves.
10. Community should never get in the way of serving the Lord, but rather, become a resource and help in serving the Lord.
11. The word ‘fervent’ or ‘fervor’ means ‘to boil or bubble,’ so keep it at a boiling point.
12. So, the spiritual temperature is to be high in the Christian community.
13. The founder of the Salvation Army said, “It is the tendency of fire to go out.”
14. Keep the spiritual fire burning in your soul.
15. It is a warning against settling into comfortable, shallow ruts in our spiritual lives.
16. When we are aglow with the Spirit, the result is always serving the Lord.
17. In other words, don't lose your spiritual steam.

ILLUSTRATION: Song with words on the screen:

***It's bubbling, it's bubbling, it's bubbling in my soul;
Such singing, such shouting since Jesus made me whole;
Folks don't understand it nor can I keep it quiet;
It's bubbling, bubbling, bubbling, bubbling;
Bubbling day and night***

18. You can help keep the community of Christ at a spiritual boiling point.

ILLUSTRATION: Diandra Leslie-Pelecky, a physics professor at the University of Texas, wrote a book about the physics of NASCAR racing, and for her research she was given the opportunity to drive a NASCAR racer on the 1.5 mile track of the Texas Motor Speedway. With an instructor in the passenger seat, she drove the car at speeds up to 150 m.p.h. It was while accelerating to get up to that speed that the author learned an interesting lesson about race cars. She writes:

“We trundled down Pit road, and when Paul motioned, I pressed the clutch, shifted into third, then released the clutch and stepped on the

gas.... A NASCAR engine is optimized for speed, so when you're puttering along at 100 m.p.h., it chugs uncomfortably. The solution is to go faster.”

So, you get the picture. The author is driving the car at 100 m.p.h., but the car is chugging roughly like a locomotive. What's the matter with this car? It doesn't feel like it's designed for speed because it can't go even 100 m.p.h. without running roughly. But that's just it. The car is designed for higher speed! The solution to a chugging race car is not to slow down—but to go faster! This baby is designed to blister the asphalt.

19. Things run best when used as they were designed.

20. You were designed to live fully for God.

21. If you live halfway for God, you will feel like you're driving a racecar with a chugging engine.

22. Your soul just won't feel right.

23. The answer is to "go faster spiritually"

24. You need to commit yourself and everything about you fully to the Lord.

25. We are created to serve the Lord with Spiritual fervor.

F. DO LIFE TOGETHER WITH HOPE, PATIENCE, AND PRAYER

1. Hope is needed because life is filled with difficulties.

2. Hope gives joy in the midst of hard and discouraging circumstances

ILLUSTRATION: Someone once said, “There are no hopeless situations in life; there are only men who have grown hopeless about them.

3. We are surrounded by people that need hope.

4. Be prepared to be a hope bringer.

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15)

5. We cannot drag our way through life, moaning and groaning.

6. Endurance or patience is necessary in the midst of challenge and difficulties.

7. Our hope-inspired joy should produce a courage which is able to hold up under the afflictions of this present age, which is passing away.

ILLUSTRATION: Ernest Gordon was the Dean of the Chapel of Princeton University for 26 years. He received his call to ministry in a Japanese concentration camp during World War II. Gordon and his fellow prisoners were used as slave labor to build the Thailand-Burma Railroad and hundreds of them perished from mistreatment. As an officer, Gordon struggled to help his men make sense of all the suffering they had to endure. He became deathly ill, however, and was spared only by the care of Chaplain Dusty Miller, who shared his own precious rations with Gordon. At one point, as Chaplain Miller nursed Gordon's broken body back to health, he spoke the words that would nurse Gordon's broken soul back to health as well (and call him into ministry). Miller

told him: "A man can experience an incredible amount of pain and suffering if he has hope. When he loses his hope, that's when he dies."

8. God calls us to be a bearer and reminder of hope.

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4)

9. Community gives us an opportunity to give hope.

10. Prayer makes endurance possible.

11. The enemy does not want you to pray.

12. When a man ceases to pray, he hinders himself from the strength of Almighty God.

13. The phrase 'rendered faithful' carries the sense in Greek of 'holding fast' or 'persisting in.'

14. Faithfulness in prayer is the antidote to the worries of life.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians 4:6)

15. We need the prayers of each other.

16. Prayer is a contribution we can make to the lives of others.

17. We do life together by praying for each other.

G. (v.13) DO LIFE TOGETHER WITH OPEN HANDS AND HEARTS

"Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." (Romans 12:13)

1. Sharing was an important way by which Christians identified themselves.

2. Hospitality and generosity were hallmarks of early Christianity.

3. The term carries the sense of intentionally striving to embrace strangers and needy individuals.

4. It is a way of showing we care.

5. Hospitality literally means 'kindness to strangers' and practice means 'press or pursue'.

6. Hospitality can fill the emptiness of a lonely heart.

7. In a world bent on getting, the Christian is bent on giving because he knows that what we keep we lose, and what we give we have.

ILLUSTRATION: Because Vance is an African American living in a predominately Hispanic neighborhood, he stands out. But what really sets Vance apart is that he is a servant-hearted father who cares not only for his own kids, but also for the many other kids who play in the streets by his building. One night at 9 p.m., there was a knock at Vance's door. The 16-year-old boy who lives a few doors down needed help tying his tie. He had a big presentation at school the next day, and he had no father to help him get ready. After Vance had finished tying the tie, the boy sheepishly asked, "Do you have a pair of black dress shoes I could borrow?" Immediately, the Spirit brought to Vance's mind the \$60 pair of shoes in his closet that he hadn't even taken out of the box yet. He was certain God was telling him to give the boy those

shoes. Vance cringed inside. He told the boy to wait at the door as he headed into the apartment to look for any pair of shoes but the expensive pair. Before he went to the closet, though, he told his wife what he sensed the Spirit was saying to him. She agreed that it sounded like God had given him a great idea. So, Vance got out his new shoes and brought them to the boy. His last hope was that they wouldn't fit. After all, how many 16-year-olds have size-12 feet? They fit perfectly.

Just a few weeks after Vance gave away his new shoes, he and his wife sensed God telling them to start a Bible study for the kids in their building. After much prayer, they decided to invite the kids to their apartment for a Sunday evening study. They ordered four Bibles in case any kids came. That Sunday, seven kids showed up at Vance's apartment—led by the 16-year-old owner of a new pair of shoes. The following week, they ordered more Bibles, and 14 kids showed up! Who would have thought the kingdom of God would come to the kids of that apartment complex just because one man chose to give away a new pair of shoes? (Bill White, Paramount, California)

8. Community is meeting the needs of others with open hands and open hearts.

II. HOW TO DO LIFE TOGETHER IN THE BODY OF CHRIST AND BEYOND

1. Paul begins to move outside of the realm of the body of Christ to others.
2. Though many of these things relate to the body of Christ, they are part of reaching into the community of people who are outside the body of Christ.
3. They are part of 'doing life together' in the Body and beyond.
4. Christians must take community outside of the walls of the church.
5. Christians cannot live isolated from the community outside the church.
6. We must do life together in the Body of Christ and beyond.

A. (v.14) DO LIFE TOGETHER BY BLESSING OTHERS

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." (Romans 12:14)

1. We are called to bless others.
2. When we bless people or things, we invoke God's blessing upon them.
3. This is possible through Christ within us.
4. It is Christ that sets the Christian apart from the world.
5. Christians were not to respond to the world in the same way the world responds.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will." (Romans 12:2)

6. The actions he is calling for are contrary to the patterns of the world in which we live.

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil." (Romans 12:17a)

7. There is no room for retaliation.
 8. Refuse to get even with those who hurt you.
 9. Through His power, we leave it in God's hands and trust God to take care of the situation.
 10. Because their minds are being renewed, they are called to have a significantly different response to the world than they would have apart from the influence of the Spirit.
 11. What he asks is possible through transformation by Christ.
 12. The best way to conquer an enemy is with the weapon of love.
- “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:43-44)**
13. When we love our enemies, this becomes one of the most powerful tools for converting the lost.
- ILLUSTRATION: ** “Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.” Martin Luther King, Jr.**
14. With His love, bless others, even those who persecute you.
 15. Blessing others is to be our lifestyle.
 16. It takes blessing others to do life together.

B. (v.15) DO LIFE TOGETHER BY SHARING IN THE JOYS AND TEARS OF OTHERS

“Rejoice with those who rejoice...” (Romans 12:15a)

1. Here, Paul probably returns to relationships inside the Christian community, though it may well include unbelievers as well.
 2. To rejoice with others even when we are deprived of their joy requires a selflessness which only the power of God's love can bestow.
 3. There is no room for jealousy in the community of Christ.
- “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” (I Corinthians 12:26)**
4. Early church father, John Chrysostom observed that it requires more Christian grace to rejoice with the joyful than to weep with the sorrowful.
 5. It is only when self is dead that we can take as much joy in the success of others as in our own.

ILLUSTRATION: Forty thousand fans were on hand in the Oakland stadium when Rickey Henderson tied Lou Brock's career stolen base record. According to *USA Today*, Lou, who had left baseball in 1979, had followed Henderson's career and was excited about his success. Realizing that Rickey would set a new record, Brock said, “I'll be there. Do you think I'm going to miss it now? Rickey did in 12 years what took me 19. He's amazing.”

The real success stories in life are with people who can rejoice in the successes of others. What Lou Brock did in cheering on Rickey Henderson should be a way of life in the family of God.

6. Few circumstances give us a better opportunity to exhibit God's grace than when someone succeeds and surpasses us in an area of our own strength and reputation.
7. It takes rejoicing with others when they rejoice to do life together.
"...mourn with those who mourn." (Romans 12:15b)
8. To weep with others is to share in their pain, sorrow, and grief of heart.
ILLUSTRATION: ** Robert Schuler once said, "Love is my decision to make your problem my problem." (Dr. Robert Schuler)
9. True community means empathizing with one another.
10. As someone once said, "True sympathy is two hearts tugging at one load."
11. Selflessness is required to weep with others when they weep.
12. Sharing tears is part of doing life together.
13. Don't let those around you who weep, weep alone.
ILLUSTRATION: Because the fear of going to the dentist is so pervasive, Japanese scientists have created a special robot that enables dentists in training to learn how to be more sensitive to the pain of their patients. If the dental trainee tugs too hard on a tooth or hits a nerve, the robot actually reacts to the pain. In fact, the five-foot-three robot has been programmed to say "It hurts" and to frown when it feels uncomfortable. "Because it's so real, dental trainees can see patients' feelings and will be able to develop good skills as they treat it not as an object, but as a human being," says Tatsuo Matsuzaki, an official at robot maker Kokoro Company. "The point is that we can share people's pain without hurting people. Treatment technique is important, but it's also important to feel what it's like to be a patient." (David Slagle, Decatur, Georgia; source: Yahoo News Online, "Humanoid Robot Teaches Dentists to Feel People's Pain (11-28-07))
14. To do life together, we must share in the load and the tears others are carrying.

C. (v.16) DO LIFE TOGETHER BY LIVING IN HARMONY
"Live in harmony with one another..." (Romans 12:16a)

1. To live in harmony means to come together.
2. Harmony literally means 'thinking the same thing'.
3. Paul was writing to dispel the discord in church.
4. Unanimity of thought calls for agreement in essentials.
5. It is harmonious relationships despite differences of opinion.
6. How many of you have discovered that not everyone will always agree with your opinion?
7. How many of you have discovered that the opinions of others are wrong and yours are right, of course, in your opinion?
8. Paul was calling the community to live in harmony when he wrote, **"then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." (Philippians 2:2)**
9. Doing life together calls for unity of heart and attitude.

10. Living in harmony is being on the same page in Christ.

ILLUSTRATION: Every three years, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship sponsors the Urbana Conference, a gathering that challenges university students to get involved in world evangelization. About 16,000 students from around the world attended the 2009 conference. "In Christ, we are all one family," said one leader. "And [Christ] breaks down political boundaries. In Christ, we have the desire to make the first steps to connect."

11. Unity is tearing down the walls that divide us.

12. To do life together, we must, through the power of Christ, live in harmony.

D. (v.16) DO LIFE TOGETHER WITH HUMILITY

"...Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited." (Romans 12:16b)

1. Phillips paraphrases, "Don't become snobbish, but take a real interest in ordinary people."

ILLUSTRATION: Here's some good news: if you're like most people, you're way above average—at almost everything. Psychologists call this the state of "illusory superiority." (It's also called "The Lake Wobegone Effect," from Garrison Keillor's fictional Minnesota town where "all the children are above average.") It simply means that we tend to inflate our positive qualities and abilities, especially in comparison to other people.

Numerous research studies have revealed this tendency to overestimate ourselves. For instance, when researchers asked a million high school students how well they got along with their peers, none of the students rated themselves below average. As a matter of fact, 60 percent of students believed they were in the top 10 percent; one researcher summarized the data this way: "It's the great contradiction: the average person believes he is a better person than the average person." Christian psychologist Mark McMinn contends that the "Lake Wobegone Effect" reveals our pride. He writes, "One of the clearest conclusions of social science research is that we are proud. We think better of ourselves than we really are, we see our faults in faint black and white rather than in vivid color, and we assume the worst in others while assuming the best in ourselves."

2. Pride gets in the way of true community.

3. Sincere love cannot be expressed by those who are proud.

4. There is no room for pride in true community.

5. Pride must be left at the door, for pride always gets in the way of community.

ILLUSTRATION: Author Frederica Mathewes-Green wrote, "The main evidence that we are growing in Christ is not exhilarating prayer experiences, but steadily increasing, humble love for other people."

6. The phrase, 'do not be conceited' means 'do not to be wise in your own eyes or proud, thinking too highly of yourself'.

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil.”
(Proverbs 3:7)

7. Community takes humility, for it takes humility to do life together.

E. (v.17) DO LIFE TOGETHER BY DOING WHAT IS RIGHT

“Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.” (Romans 12:17b)

1. The verb translated ‘be careful’ is literally ‘to think of beforehand.’
2. It seems to suggest that the conduct of believers ought not to be regulated by habit, but rather that each situation that holds prospect for a witness to the world be weighed so that the action taken will not bring unfavorable reflection on the gospel.
3. Remember that people are watching what you do.
4. Christians are being watched by the world.

ILLUSTRATION: (*Picture) Actor, writer and speaker, Will Rogers said, “Live so that you wouldn't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.” (Will Rogers)

5. Through the power of Christ and for His sake, we are to do what is right.
“And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.” (II

Thessalonians 3:13)

6. It takes giving careful attention to doing the right thing to do life together.

F. (V.18) DO LIFE TOGETHER BY LIVING IN PEACE

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
(Romans 12:18)

1. The words, ‘if it is possible’ implies that peace is not a compromise of good and cannot be purchased at any price.
2. Christians must do all they can to promote peace and tolerance without betraying the will of God.
3. Responsibility for discord must to no extent be traceable to failure on our part to do all that is compatible with holiness, truth, and right.
4. Christians are commanded to be not only peace keepers but peace makers.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”
(Matthew 5:9)

5. Our aim and purpose is to live at peace with everyone.

ILLUSTRATION: Author Diana Garland relates the following account by R.L. Honeycutt on the origin of the Irish expression "Chancing one's arm": On display in St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin hangs an ancient door with a rough hewn, rectangular opening hacked in the center. The story of this "door of reconciliation" and the related Irish expression of "chancing one's arm" are remarkable and instructive.

In 1492, two prominent Irish families, the Ormonds and Kildares, were in the midst of a bitter feud. Beseiged by Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, Sir James Butler, Earl of Ormond, and his followers took refuge in the chapter house of St. Patrick's Cathedral, bolting themselves in. As the siege wore on, the Earl of Kildare concluded the feuding was foolish.

Here were two families worshipping the same God, in the same church, living in the same country, trying to kill each other. So he called out to Sir James and, as an inscription in St. Patrick's says today, "Undertoake on his honour that he should receive no villanie."

Afraid of "some further treachery," Ormond did not respond. So, Kildare seized his spear, cut a hole in the door, and thrust his hand through. It was grasped by another hand inside the church. The door was opened and the two men embraced, thus ending the family feud. From Kildare's noble gesture came the expression "chancing one's arm."

6. Doing life together is reaching out your arm in peace

CONCLUSION: We are called to community. We have learned from scripture today what it takes to do community.

ILLUSTRATION: The football team at Northwest High School in McDermott, Ohio had a young man named Jake Porter on its roster. Jake has a disorder called chromosomal fragile-x which means he was cognitively challenged. Jake loved football. He went out for the team as a freshman and showed so much spirit the coach didn't have the heart to cut him. He came to every practice, dressed in full gear for every game knowing he would never actually get on the field or play in a real game.

As they came to the last game of his senior year, his coach, Dave Frantz wanted Jake to get in the game, so he explained Jake's situation. He asked that if the score was lopsided at the end, if it would be okay to put Jake in for a play. They practiced all week, having Jake take a handoff and touch one knee to the ground so no one would risk hurting him. The other coach agreed.

With five seconds to go in the game, Jake's team was losing forty-two to nothing. The coach thought that qualified as lopsided so he called time out. He was putting Jake in the game to do the play they practiced, but the other coach came sprinting across the field. That opposing coach said, "I don't just want him to get in the game. I want him to score." The coach did not know what to say, surprised that the opposing coach would give up a shutout. Jake's coach said, "We have only practiced the knee thing." The other coach said, "You give him the ball and we'll make sure he scores."

The coach went back to the huddle and told Jake, "You're going to the house." Jake started jumping up and down. Everyone was taken off guard.

The ball was placed in his hands, but since he had practiced going down on his knee, he started to go down, but the team stopped him. They pointed him to the end zone. With everyone yelling, he started towards the end. Everyone, including the referees, was pointing toward the end zone. He walked slowly toward the line of scrimmage. 21 players parted in front of him as if they were the Red Seas and he was Moses, and he took off for the Promised Land. It took him almost twelve second. Everybody on the sidelines was running step-for step with him. Jake Porter scored a touchdown.

The bleachers exploded, everybody was cheering. People were crying and hugging each other. Those that were there will never forget the day Jake Porter scored a touchdown. Jake's touchdown became everybody's touchdown.

- Community is helping others make a touchdown.
- It is helping others make it across the goal line victoriously.
- It is not just living our own game or running our own spiritual race.
- It is helping others make it to Jesus in victory.
- Will you commit to community- to *doing life together*?
- Will you help others make it across the goal line?

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