



How Will We Stay Connected? Sermon Study Guide 9/18/16 **The Story Houston**

Guiding Questions for Chapter Meetings or Solo Study:

Who do you consider 'family'? Do you look forward to "dwelling together" with them (Ps. 133)? Why or why not?

Do you ever struggle to stay connected to your family? What factors make staying connected difficult for you?

Eric talked about taking his family for granted. Why do you think we often live on auto-pilot?

What is the "poison of the ordinary"? Who, or what, do you tend to take for granted?

Have you ever experienced a wake-up call? What happened, and how did it change your perspective?

Scripture and Quotes:

"How good it is for brothers and sisters to dwell together in community!" - Psalm 133:1

"Christianity means community...The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer...It is true, of course, that what is an unspeakable gift of God for the lonely individual is easily disregarded and trodden under foot by those who have the gift every day. It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren."
D. Bonhoeffer, Life Together

"It's Satan's agent of familiarity. His mission is clear and total: 'Take nothing from your victim; cause him only to take everything for granted.' He won't steal your salvation; he'll just make you forget what it was like to be lost...He won't take your children, he'll just make you too busy to notice them. His whispers to procrastinate are seductive...you forget that the faces around your table will soon be at tables of their own. Hence, books go unread, hearts go unnurtured, and opportunities go ignored. All because the poison of the ordinary has deadened your senses to the magic of the moment." -

M. Lucado



How Will We Stay Connected? Sermon Study Guide 9/18/16 **The Story Houston**

What are some examples of people in the Bible who had a wake-up call and learned to cherish their 'families'?

What was the "crisis," and what did they need in that moment?

Why do you think it takes a crisis to open our eyes to the sacredness of life and family?

Sometimes we approach family with the same strategies we employed when we played Red Rover as kids. Hold on tight. Play to win. And if things go wrong, blame each other. What's wrong with this strategy?

For a family (or church) following Jesus together, what's the alternative strategy? Instead of each of us holding onto each other, relying on our own strength, how should we configure our connection?

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." - Matthew 26:36-38

Timothy, my dear son...I thank God...as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so I may be filled with joy. 2 Tim 1:2-4

(After learning she was pregnant with the Son of God...) At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered the home and greeted Elizabeth. - Luke 1:39

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:1, 4-5

Prayer: Lord, you've surrounded us with so many people to cherish. Our church, our relatives, our friends all reflect your divine image and all deserve our loving attention. But this world is full of distractions, and we're prone to losing focus. We want to see people the way You do. We ask you to open our eyes. We hope to become people who don't need a crisis to live with the perspective and priorities of Jesus. Thank you for everything. Amen.