

# FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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**SERMON:** *Work*  
**SERIES:** *Building Community*  
**SCRIPTURES:**  
**SPEAKER:** *Shaun Kipe and Ray Kipe*  
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*\*Credit to*

**(SHAUN)** Well good morning, it is so great to worship with you.

You have picked a great morning to be here. Today we are kicking off a 4 week series, where we are going to talk about building our Community Life **(SERIES GRAPHIC)** here at Five Forks church.

It's one thing to visit the same building as a group of several hundred other people, once a week for church services, it's a totally different thing to actually have community with this group. And the truth is, unless we are intentional about our community, connectedness, it will never happen. That even in a group of several hundred people, we feel alone or disconnected from the group.

And often our individualized culture does not help us. We think we can get through life on our own and this is perhaps most often exemplified in our spirituality. But you see God's presence is uniquely manifest in authentic community. And we believe the church is supposed to be the clearest representation of authentic community.

Jesus once said these words, **"Where two or three are gathered in my name...I am there." (Matthew 18)**

**You were created to love and be loved. You were created to know and be known. You were created so serve and be served. You were created to celebrate and to be celebrated.** (Ortberg)

We were created for community, it is one of God's gifts to humanity. It is vital to the health of our church family.

And so we're gonna take the next four weeks to talk about these four key ingredients to Community Life and how you can participate in that. Four key ingredients: **Work, Play, Pray/Worship** and **Eat**.

This morning we're gonna focus on that first word, work. We want to talk about a proper perspective of work (what the Bible says about it) and then we want to share some stories, real life experiences of how working together is vital to community life.

Now when I started planning out this sermon series on Community Life, I thought it'd be good to not only talk about community life, but to emulate community life from up here, the pulpit.

And I thought what better way than to stand alongside some of the guys that I am honored to work with each and every day. And so, as part of this series, a couple of the messages, we'll be doing some team preaching and team writing.

And as I was working on this message about working together, began to think who on staff most clearly represents and emulates work. And for those of you who've been around Five Forks for any amount of time you're not shocked that Dad, Pastor Ray, is the one up here with me. I've heard people around Five Forks say, "If you need work done around here, you call Ray Kipe. If a tree falls in your yard and you need someone to clean up, you call Ray Kipe. If you have piano in your basement that your trying to move you call Ray call Kipe. If the copy machine stops working, you call Ray Kipe."

Much of what I have learned about work and service has come by watching my Dad.

So today, I'm honored to have my Dad (Pastor Ray) up here alongside of me for this message.

And by the way Dad, since I have you up here...Jenny reminded me yesterday, we do actually have an old piano in our basement that's needs moved. Not sure what your schedule is like this week. Thinking that since we're up here in front of the church, you can't say no.

**(RAY)** So that's why you wanted me up here? Seriously though, we do want to talk about "**WORKing** Together". We to begin by gaining...

### **1. A proper perspective of WORK.**

And you can go ahead and open your Bibles to Genesis 3.

We live in society that has some *misunderstanding* about the place of work in our lives. And to help you understand what I mean, I'll ask it in the form of a question: **"Do you work to live or, Do you live to work?"**

Here's the idea behind that question. Do you work to live (do you work in order to get on with life)...do you work, because you have to, in order to pay the bills. You don't like it, you're miserable every day, you gut it out, you put up with it...because you have to, in order to get on with the good things in life, which are the things outside of work. You might day dream:

*If I won the **lottery** I'd quit work immediately and never work again. Or perhaps:*

*You are **counting down** the days to retirement so that you never have to work again.*

Think about the American dream. Work hard, earn money, multiply that money so that...at 65 you can retire, and you'll never have to work again. Isn't that our picture of the good life? A life where I no longer have to work. I can just sit and relax all day with no obligations or responsibilities.

There are many who view work in this manner and many who have come to believe that **work is a result of sin**. It is part of the curse in Genesis 3. We'll come back to that in moment. So: Do you work to live? OR...

**Do you live to work?** In this case, work is one of the good things in life. Even though there are aspects about work that you do not prefer, you wouldn't give it up. Even if you won the lottery, you would work because it fills you up, it's part of your purpose and meaning in life. Even as you think about retirement, your mind doesn't go to "pew, no work." Instead, your mind is thinking about the different kinds of work you'll be doing then.

Do you see the difference?

Which view gets us closer to the **Biblical view** of work?

**(SHAUN)** So a little Bible trivia for you. In what chapter do Adam and Eve sin? When does sin enter our world?

**Genesis 3:6 - <sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.**

When God found out, here's what happens...verse 17...

**<sup>17</sup> To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'**

**“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground...”**

So some people have read these words in Genesis 3 and said, this seems to be a statement about work. Look at all of phrases related to painful toil, the sweat of your brow therefore work or any time we to have exert effort it must be part of the curse of God in Genesis 3 and the result of sin.

M-F, 8am – 5pm is the result of sin. Dandelions in your yard, shoveling your driveway, homework, vacuum cleaner, washing dishes, folding clothes...all the result of sin...it's work...and it's why I've told Jenny I will not partake in any of those sinful activities around the Kipe Household!

But, not so fast. Do you know when work is first mentioned in your Bible? Before or after sin? Turn with me to Genesis 2.

**Genesis 2 - <sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.**

Work came before sin. While Eden was initially a garden free from sin, and while it was good, it was also initially an incomplete garden. It wasn't quite whole or finished.

In fact, the Hebrew word for “work” in this passage literally means... “to till or break up the ground.”

Several years ago, Jenny and I decided it would be great to plant a garden, on a big open lot that Jenny's parents owned. I knew the first step was tilling the ground. Have you ever tilled, untilled ground? I borrowed my dad's big tiller. And after

spending several hours behind this piece of machinery, went home and arms were vibrating for a week. I thought this is never gonna work. I'll never be able to till that ground. Jenny's never gonna have a garden. And I thought what do you do when you need something done? So I called Ray Kipe.

You see one of Adam's first tasks was working in the garden. He was a farmer. Tilling the ground. Putting forth effort to improve and to create. To put to use what God had given him.

This why all through the Bible you see positive examples of putting forth effort...

Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus that we are **“Created in Christ Jesus to do good works...”**

**Philippians - “I press on toward the goal to win the prize...”**

**Colossians - “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...”**

Work, even exerting effort, is good...we were created for it.

**(RAY)** But wait...there's more, not only are humans clearly given the task of working in the garden.

Did you know that God is a worker?

**Genesis 2 – Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. <sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.**

You are made in **God's image**. He dwells in you. When you work, you are living out the image of God in your life.

This is why there is a sense of **accomplishment** and achievement when we do good, hard, honest work to complete tasks.

Over the last several months I have been taking advantage of some warmer, dryer days to **build fences** on the farm. The reason it's taken me several months, is because **Shaun** hasn't offered to come and help yet.

It is fairly **exhausting** work at times. Crawling on and off the tractor, lifting the ten foot wooden fence posts, stretching the wire, twisting the ends by hand to secure it. At the end of the day, my back hurts, my legs are tired, my fingers ache and are stiff from the work and the effort.

But when I drive in my driveway and see those new fences, and the animals still corralled instead of wandering freely around the country side – there is a certain satisfaction and contentment that wells up inside me. It was hard work, but it was fulfilling...deep down, I think, **"I was made for this!"**

It's like my soul is crying out, *"I want to **contribute** something to this world. I want to **make a difference**. I want this world to be different because I'm in it."*

For me it is that type of outside farm work. For someone else it might be the effort of **decorating** your house, or **weeding** your garden. For another person it can be **writing** an article, **composing** a song, entertaining your **child**, or finding a **glitch** in the computer program and correcting it.

They all take effort. They are tiring. Maybe even exhausting, physically, or mentally or emotionally, but in the end, the sense of fulfillment is so rewarding, and it makes the effort worth it.

We are hardwired to work and it's why we find fulfillment in that work.

So if your dream or hope was, *"I can't wait until I get to heaven, then I won't have to work anymore!"* You may want to reconsider what heaven is like. God's intention, even into eternity, is us still working – because it is a good thing!

**(SHAUN)** It's true we find fulfillment in our work. The reason I haven't offered to help dad is because I want him to experience the fullness of fulfillment for all the work he's doing building his fences.

So, at Five Forks we believe that work is part of the intended design for humans and therefore as a group of Jesus followers, we expect that it will be part of God's community. Working together will be part of what we do as the church.

## **2. How is work related to our Community Life?**

### **a. When we work hard together, we become connected.**

There's a connection between working together and relationships.

It's kind of interesting. We just talked about how Adam and Eve were created to work and till the garden. Did you know one of the other major themes through the creation story...relationships!

**Genesis 2 - <sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."**

Adam shouldn't have to till the garden on his own. He'll be much better off, if he's got a helper, a co-worker to till the ground with him.

The Hebrew word "**HELPER**" is the word **ezer**.

It does not mean that Eve is inferior or less capable than Adam. Don't picture Adam does the work and when he needs a little boost Eve give him a break every once in a while. It does not mean that tilling the ground is for Adam and not Eve.

In fact, the word ezer is used elsewhere in the Old Testament in reference to God! God is your helper. It does not mean that God is inferior to you. Or that God can only help you in certain tasks.

Part of the core of Adam and Eve's relationship was tilling the ground **together**. It was part of what united them.

When we work and serve together as a church, it helps to unite us, bond us together, it's how we were made.

I was trying to think of examples of this, I remember when I attended Messiah College in the early-mid 2000's. And while I was there, we used this phrase on the soccer team... **"Nobody outworks Messiah."**

This phrase, working hard, was like a slogan, a motto, built into the culture of the soccer team...that helped to develop a sense of connectedness and comradery among that group of guys.

I remember one work-out in particular. It was our first winter soccer training session. And winter training, mostly involved running, usually outside. And I remember this one afternoon, it was bitter cold. We were meeting to run hill sprints.

The team met in the locker room to get dressed. And then we all started the walk out to the hill where our workout would take place.

I remember my immediate thoughts as we walked out of the locker room...the stinging cold of the wind, your hands begin to ach, your nose and face begin to go

numb, harder to breathe than usual. And I remember thinking that day, “I don’t feel like doing this today. This is gonna be hard.”

In fact, as we were walking, snow began to fall. Coach Brandt met us at the hill. And I remember what he said to us that day, “Guys, it’s really cold today, the wind is bad, this is brutal. Many of your classmates, won’t venture outside today, and every other team in our area is canceling practice because of the weather. Nobody outworks Messiah.” And he said, “Everybody on the line.”

And coach had this really unique way about him when it came to sprints, it was a way of building team unity. You only ran when he called out your name.

And so he might call Shaun. And I would start to run. And the minute I left the line, 29 guys behind me, would all start screaming my name. And then as I ran he might call someone else’s name. And everyone shouts for them. The thing is he never tried to even out the number of sprints. So, I might get back to the starting line, and he would call my name again. So I would run a second sprint, sometimes a third, a fourth. I may run 9 or 10 times and other guys may not run any sprints at all. And your first thought is, that’s unfair.

But it was teaching me how to help carry the load for someone else. They were helping me by yelling my name. By the time you graduate from Messiah you realize it’s an honor to run **for the other guys on the team**. That work, those sprints, that day, in that weather, on that hill...it bonded us. It was special.

Work is not a necessary evil, it is part of our calling as humans and as a church and when we work hard together it unites us.

Just a little over a month ago, we held our annual Christmas dinners. One week, every night...and we served over 1000 Christmas dinners.

Now that's a ton of work. But here's the best part about the dinners.

Did you know that there was a group of about 5 guys, volunteers, who came in early every morning that week to pick the turkey off of the bones?

A couple hours later, every morning there was group that came in to begin peeling and mashing potatoes, baking green beans. I don't know what all they do back there, but they're getting the meal prepared.

A couple hours later, every evening, a crew comes to help serve the meals.

And each evening when the meal has ended all the guests have gone home. There were folks here, volunteers, until late...washing dishes, putting pots and pans away, getting prepared for the next night, tired and sweaty.

My office happens to be above the catwalk in the gym and I know they've been working hard. But I hear them, laughing, talking, just enjoying the fellowship of working together...they're "tilling the garden" for the Kingdom.

**(RAY)**

**b. Working together (also) ties us to something bigger than ourselves.**

**Ecclesiastes 4:9 - Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.**

You and I can accomplish together, what we could not have done on our own.

Several years ago our wood cutting ministry was invited to cut up some apple trees and get the wood down in Fairfield. The orchard owner offered us 100 of the approximately 300 trees he had pushed out. So we arrived with 44 people. 6 dump trucks, 14 chainsaws, 3 skid loaders. And a lot of enthusiasm.

Now, 100 trees was about a row and a half and we jumped into it. It didn't take long for the trees to start disappearing. (One person described it as a bunch of ants making the trees disappear.) The owner saw us working and asked me – "Do you want to just take the rest of the row?" I said, "We will be glad to." So we kept cutting and hauling. Before long, he came back and asked if we wanted to take the whole bunch of trees. I said we didn't want to be greedy and take what others needed.

He said, "No I have more trees and I really need these trees out of here."

So in one Saturday morning we cleared out about 300 apple trees and by lunch time the orchard owner was preparing the space for his replanting. No one person could have done that on their own. It was a group of people working together and accomplishing a lot.

How about this example my brother recently shared on Facebook.

### **VIDEO of Amish men moving barn.**

250 men carrying a barn, by hand, several hundred yards. Amazing what a group of people can do working together.

When we put forth effort as a group to accomplish something that we could not accomplish on our own, we become connected to the people in that group.

This is why working together as a church is so vital to our relational health. It is one of the primary ways for us to build up our community life.

**(SHAUN)** See, sometimes we begin to believe church is coming to a one hour service, but we want you to know, it is far more than that...we were created to be workers together in the Kingdom. And when we do, we become a team, a connected family.

Maybe you're sitting here this morning and thinking, "I want to be part of the team...but where do I even begin? Maybe you've been coming to Five Forks for several weeks, months or years...but haven't yet felt that sense of connection, and you're wondering how do I get involved in the work of this church? You're thinking, "I have some talents, skills, resources, time...I want Five Forks to be different because I'm here."

Jesus once said, **"the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few."** And so as we close, we just want to be as clear and practical as possible in helping you become one of the workers.

We're just gonna highlight some ways for you to get involved, to WORK and serve TOGETHER at Five Forks.

### **3. Working together at Five Forks.**

One of the simplest ways to go about getting connected in serving and working alongside, is to pull out the RED card in the seat pocket in front of you. We call this our serve card.

We can't go down through here and talk about everything that's listed.

We just want to mention a couple...

#### **SERVE CARDS:**

**Children's Ministry - PIC**

**Student Ministry - PIC**

For 9 years on staff here at Five Forks my closest group of friends were the youth leaders, in large part because of the hours we spent working together. It was getting out of bed early on Sunday morning for our planning meetings. It was every

Wednesday night, hanging out with and engaging with our teens. It was serving 1000 meatball subs to our church family. It was late nights, sitting out on the chapel steps in the cold waiting for teens to get picked up from events. It was 6 hours one Saturday morning, blowing up balloons, to fill the basement for a missions promotion project. It was hard work. But it was special and it's why we became so close.

Look children and teens, young people are so important to us here at Five Forks.

Chris Phillips and Brady Smith would love to have you step up and work alongside of them for the sake of our young people. We need teachers. We need helpers. We need chaperones. We need folks willing to sit in the nursery.

“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”

**(RAY)**

**Moving Ministry** – One of the things we do is help people move. There's a group of about 20 different people who are part of this. We show up at homes, filled with boxes and furniture. We form an assembly line and start moving boxes. Packing them into trucks. In a few hours we can move an entire house! We often joke, “don't stand still or you'll get packed in the truck.”

In 2019 we helped move 40- 50 families. Most of them, not even Five Forks families. It's a great group of volunteers, which has turned into, friendships just because of working alongside each other.

**Food Pantry/Clothes Closet** ministry. Growing significantly this year. Did you know that since July (6 months) We've seen an increase in the number of families from our local community that we serve in our food pantry by an average 25 families per month. So we need more help. A couple of hours a week or even a month will be a huge help. What if you joined this team in some capacity? I want to mention the:

**Café** – Every Sunday morning we need volunteers to help serve donuts, coffee, clean up stations, clean up tables and chairs.

I can mention the **Quilting** ministry – meeting here tomorrow morning, to make quilts together, to give away to others.

Now, you can't be part of all of these ministries. If you don't see something specifically on this list that seems to fit your skills, write what you can do in the comments box at the bottom and we'll reach out with opportunities.

The point is not for you to just keep adding more and more to your already busy schedule.

We truly believe that in working together and alongside of one another, it will deepen our sense of ownership for this church and connectedness to each other. It will move us from a group of people who happen to sit in the same room for an hour on Sunday each week: to a team, a family working for the Kingdom of God. Making a difference far beyond the walls of this building.

So we want to encourage you, if you have not already, find an area where you can be involved in serving. Rubbing shoulders with other volunteers – **Working together.**