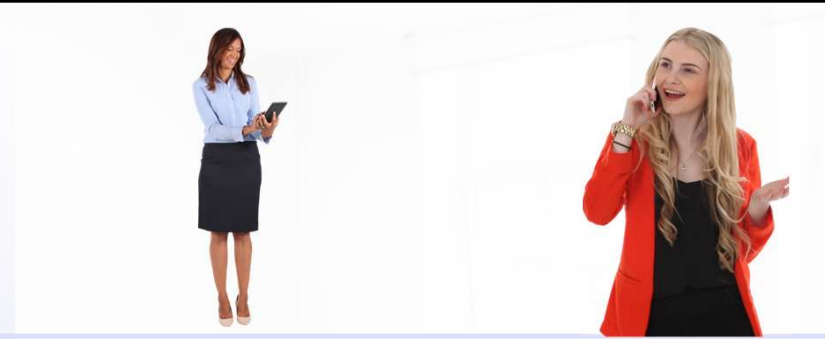



# “Together”





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other



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Millennials communicate with each other far more than any advertising campaign can. When trying to figure out whether something is worth buying, millennials will go to their friends and social networks to see what people think. They use this collective filter to sort out research and other word-of-mouth style information when making decisions



Millennials don't want to be talked at. They are used to having control over the information at their fingertips in their day to day lives, and their interactions with brands online is no different. They want to control their messaging. They also are easily incentivized. They expect to be rewarded for their loyalty. They want to be among the first to receive updates. They want to be included in all communication efforts...If you do things the way you used to – they won't care about what you're selling.

**“Lord,  
[when you send us  
the Spirit]  
are you at this time  
going to restore the  
kingdom to Israel?”**



That’s kind of what happened to Jesus’ message on the Christian holiday we celebrate today for it too was a hard time to tell the disciples anything. I’m talking about the Ascension of Christ.

You see, Christ’s Ascension happened just after the disciples had just seen their teacher, their friend, a man who could calm a storm and cast out demons, one who had been crucified, died, and in the tomb three days, now alive and well with the holes still in his hands and in his feet – and able to appear in locked rooms without the keys! If all that wasn’t enough, they had just heard about the promise of the Holy Spirit – that they soon would have power from God! All of this had just happened and now they were looking for the kingdom of heaven and Jesus’ return just ahead in the near future...and so, it seems they didn’t care right then about where Jesus was going and for how long. All they had in their minds to ask was, “Lord, [when you send us the Spirit] are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

It would be they who would be doing kingdom work!

–THEY not Jesus, who would be witnesses to the world of the power and glory of God. That was the message Jesus was trying to tell them at his ascension ‘you will go, and share the good news, baptizing nations, and teaching them to obey all my commands.’

A woman with long brown hair and a man with glasses and a blue shirt are standing side-by-side, holding white signs. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. They are both smiling. The background is a blurred image of a crowd of people.

Together  
We Share

The Good  
News of God

The disciples missed the point – they kept asking Jesus what he was going to do, when he was going to do it, and how he was going to. They were focusing on the power and might of the one who was leaving them to sit at the right hand of God the father. Even though the eleven gathered in the upper room as they were told – I think they still didn’t quite understand that it would be they who would be doing kingdom work – it would be they, not Jesus, who would be witnesses to the world of the power and glory of God. That was the message Jesus was trying to tell them at his ascension ‘you will go, and share the good news, baptizing nations, and teaching them to obey all my commands.’ This was the mind of Christ he desired them so much to share!

The disciples entered the upper room without the mind of Christ. But, I propose, what they did there brought them in line with the mind of Christ, that it showed them the truth about the coming of the kingdom of God. I propose that we too can be closer to God if we are as diligent and committed to the same practice as the disciples in the upper room.

# “Together”



While they were there, [in the upper room], <sup>14</sup>They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

The ascension message Jesus gave the disciples finally came through when they disciples, along with the women, along with Mary, the mother of Jesus and perhaps some others of their mothers, and I would guess along with their wives and perhaps and their sisters -- the ascension message came loud and clear when they all prayed together. Men and women the whole family of God listening for the heart-strings of God in prayer.

Jesus did not play on their heart stings – instead he pleaded to the heart of God – he prayed fervently for his followers. According to John, Jesus prayed for God to bless and protect his followers. John 17:1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:  
"...

17:11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one.

Jesus prayed this prayer before he was betrayed, before his trial, before his crucifixion, before the resurrection, before his ascension.

He cared about his disciples. They were like family. He was preparing them for the future. The message they would be carrying would make it necessary that they band together – the world would be harsh and unyielding to this message at times. It would be **they together** who would need God's protection, for they would be giving out God's grace, showing God's mercy to the world.

Millennials and most other people today care more about what people say about us, than what we say. They care more about if what we believe makes a difference in the way we live and treat others – than what we believe. They need to know God is real to us, not if God is believed to be real. The message of the empty tomb, of free mercy and grace, needs to be shared first hand today – it needs to be shown as free, and actual mercy...

Good parents think about their children and prepare as best they can for their future. The most important way to do this is through prayer. Prayer together, prayer at meals, prayer during storms, and prayer during celebrations. Today mothers and fathers, lay your hands on your children and pray – Today children, lay your hands upon your mothers and your fathers and pray. Become of one mind with God, learn his will and receive the power to live more and more like Jesus every day – this is my prayer for you.

We praise God for those in our midst who have helped us be of one mind with God. We honor those who have taught us to look for the kingdom of heaven. We honor those who have stayed up late into the night praying to God for our protection and who taught us say our prayers at night, to pray during tough times, and go to church on Sunday to pray with others. Find groups to pray with throughout the week and ask God together for what you want.