



CHRISTIAN
UNION

Seven Keys to Kingdom Advancement

KEY THREE: SEEKING GOD LIFESTYLE: STRONG COMMUNITY

May God's Kingdom Come



Matthew 6:9-10 - Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Sermon on the Mount, 1877
Carl H. Bloch



3. Seeking God Lifestyle: 6. Strong Community

We live in the church age, and it's our role to hasten the day of Christ's return by deepening and expanding the kingdom of God.

God has intended that we seek Him and fulfill His purposes as a community of strong and committed disciples. There is great power and success when seeking God as a team instead of just on one's own.



Seven Keys to Kingdom Advancement

1. Aspiration and Desperation
2. Theological Foundations
3. **Seeking God Wholeheartedly**
4. Spiritual Practices
5. Supernatural Aspects
6. Impacting the Three Spheres
7. Leadership



3. Seeking God Lifestyle: 6. Strong Community

Seeking God Lifestyle

1. Humility with Help of Fasting
2. Fervent and Frequent Prayer
3. Massive Intake of Scripture
4. Deep and Ongoing Repentance
5. Faithful Obedience
- 6. Strong Community**
7. Relentless Perseverance



Seeking God Together

2 Chronicles 7:12-15 - Then the LORD appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. ¹³ When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, ¹⁴ if my **people** who are called by my name humble **themselves**, and pray and **seek my face** and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Notice the plural context of this passage: “people” and “themselves.”



3. Seeking God Lifestyle: 6. Strong Community

Seeking God for Kingdom Advancement

is a Team Effort!

It's not enough to seek God on one's own.



3. Seeking God Lifestyle: 6. Strong Community

Strong Community

1. Multiplicative Spiritual Power in Groups
2. Unity of the Spirit Preceding Filling of the Spirit
3. Mutual Edification Via Spiritual Gifts
4. Strong Christian Friendships
5. Scheduled Group Gatherings
6. The Need and Call to Recruit Others



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Multiplicative Spiritual Power in Groups

Leviticus 26:8 - “Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a **hundred of you shall chase ten thousand**, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.”

Deuteronomy 32:30 - “one [has] chased a thousand, and **two have put ten thousand to flight**”

John 13:35 - “By this **all people will know that you are my disciples**, if you have love for one another.”



Strong Community

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Unity of the Spirit Precedes Filling of the Spirit

The absolute necessity of unity of the Spirit among Christians is axiomatic and taught elsewhere. There is to be no malice, unforgiveness, jealousy, gossip, slander, complaining, grumbling, rebellion, abuse, selfish ambition, division or evil suspicion among Christians, but love, humility, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.



Unity of the Spirit Precedes Filling of the Spirit

Acts 1:12-14 - Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ **All these with one accord (homothymodon “one accord”) were devoting themselves to prayer**, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.



Worthy of Memorization

Colossians 3:12-17 - Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



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Mutual Edification Via Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:7 - To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the **common good**

1 Corinthians 14:12 - So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in **building up the church**



Mutual Edification Via Spiritual Gifts

Ephesians 4:11-12 - to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for **building up the body of Christ**

1 Peter 4:10 - As each has received a gift, use it to **serve one another**, as good stewards of God's varied grace



Mutual Edification Via Spiritual Gifts

Many Spiritual Gifts - Many are listed in the Bible including teaching, leadership, administration, encouragement, tongues, healing, prophecy, miracles, distinguishing of spirits, service, mercy, giving, faith, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and helping.

New Testament Gifts - In the New Testament, most can be found in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and 1 Peter 4



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Strong Christian Friendships

Intentional Cultivation - It's needed to give intentional effort! It's essential for Christians to sacrifice and work hard for the cultivation of strong Christian friendships. This brings encouragement, joy, and perseverance.

Hebrews 10:24 - **And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.** Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”



Strong Christian Friendships

When one has joy and strength that comes from strong friendships, a Christian is all the more able to spend energy seeking and pleasing God.

Proverbs 17:17 - A **friend loves at all times**, and a brother is born for adversity.

1 Peter 1:22 - Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,



Strong Christian Friendships

John 15:10-13 - If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹² "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone **lay down his life for his friends.**

Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10 - **Two are better than one**, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!



Strong Christian Friendships

“It turns out that persons that are more socially connected to family, friends and community are happier, physically healthier and live longer... It’s the quality of one’s close relationships that matter.” - Dr. Robert Waldinger

- [A Harvard Study of Adult Development](#) - an 80-year study shows relationships are the key to happiness
- [Ted Talk on the Harvard Study of Adult Development YouTube Video \(12:46\)](#)

Strong Christian Friendships



Further Attested in Society and Research:

- Robert Putnam's books, *Bowling Alone* and *Better Together*
- Finland and Denmark consistently happiest countries
- Amish happiest in the U.S.
- Johann Hari's *Lost Connections*
- Alan Loy McGinnis' *The Friendship Factor*



Strong Christian Friendships

Having strong Christian friendships does much to deepen and accelerate Christian growth.

Colossians 2:2, 3 - that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.



Strong Christian Friendships

Ephesians 4:11-16 - And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ **until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,** ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.



Strong Christian Friendships

James 5:16 - Therefore, **confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.** The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Proverbs 28:13 - He who conceals his sins does not prosper, **but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.**



Strong Christian Friendships

Example of John Wesley's Groups Aiding in Spiritual Growth:

- The Class Meeting
- The Band
- The Select Band
- The Society
- The Penitent Band



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Strong Community

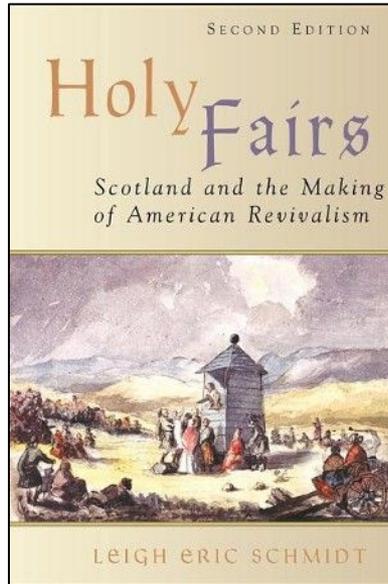
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Pattern of Regularly Seeking God is in the Scriptures

- **Daily:** morning and evening (the sun rises and the sun sets every day) (Numbers 28:1-8)
- **Weekly:** weekly on Sunday (originally Saturday) (Exodus 20:8-11, Leviticus 23:3; Numbers 28:9, 10; Deuteronomy 5:12-15)
- **Monthly:** monthly day (a “new moon” occurs every month) (Numbers 28:11-15)
- **Annually:** seven special gatherings per year, especially seven-day gathering every six months - (in the spring and the fall) (Leviticus 23:1-44)

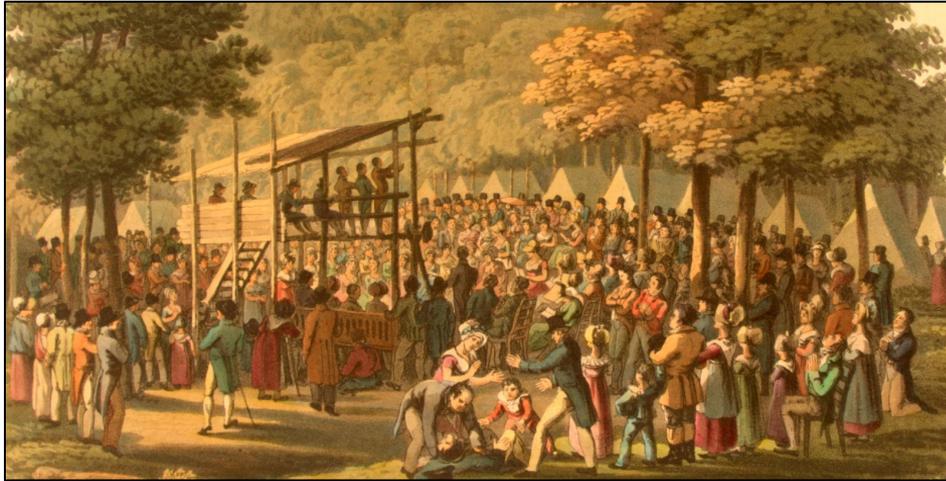
Holy Fairs by Scottish Presbyterians



For many years Scottish Presbyterians stirred faith and devotion through multi-day gatherings derisively dubbed “Holy Fairs” by their detractors. They brought these practices in the New World after immigrating in the 1700’s.

Holy Fairs: Scotland and the Making of American Revivalism
Leigh Eric Schmidt, Professor at Washington University in St. Louis

Let It Be Like Cane Ridge!



Famous Camp Meeting in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, 1801

The term “camp meeting” was coined shortly after the famous, massive camp meeting of Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1801 which played a major role in the Second Great Awakening. Today, Christians have forgotten the importance of using “vacations” to draw closer to the Lord.



Keswick Convention in England (1875 to the Present)

Five-Day Conference Dramatically Impacting Evangelicalism

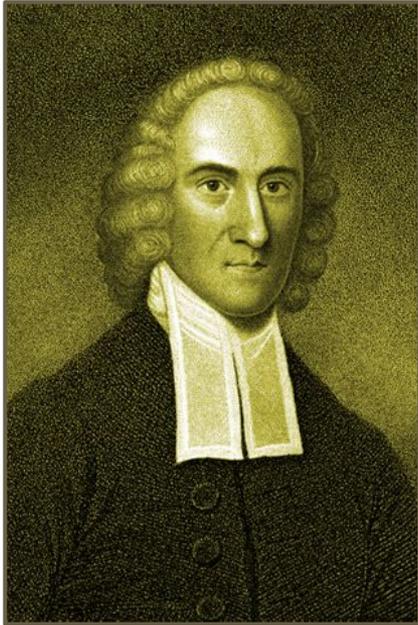
1. Exceeding sinfulness of sin
2. Jesus Christ as the only provision
3. Consecration and full-surrender
4. Fullness of the Holy Spirit to live a new life
5. Response and call to service



More Examples of Group Gatherings

- United States:
 - Albert Raboteau's *Slave Religion*
 - Cities Established to Seek God: Ocean Grove, Ocean City
 - John Mott Student Volunteer Movement
 - Promise Keepers
- Personal Experience - Ski Safari, Panama City Beach Project, Cru Summer Projects, CU Fires

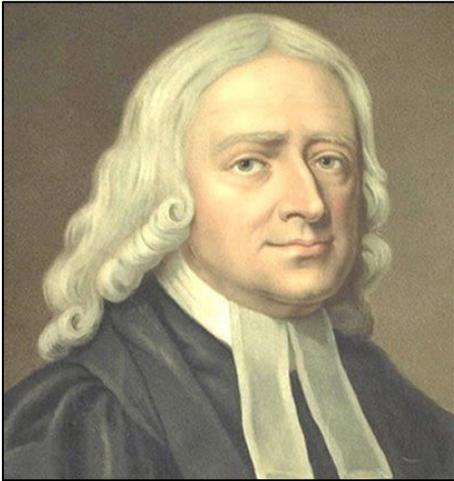
Godly Men Seek God With Others



“The state of the times extremely requires a fullness of the divine Spirit in ministers, and we ought to give ourselves no rest till we have obtained it. And in order to [do] this, I should think ministers, above all persons, ought to be much in secret prayer and fasting, and also much in praying and fasting one with another. It seems to me it would be becoming the circumstances of the present day, if ministers in a neighborhood **would often meet together and spend days in fasting and fervent prayer among themselves, earnestly seeking for those extraordinary supplies of divine grace from heaven, that we need at this day.**”

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)
Pastor and Theologian of the Great Awakening

From *John Wesley's Journal*: Monday, January 1, 1739



“Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles were present at our love feast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground.”

John Wesley (1703-1791)

English Revivalist and Founder of Methodism

Godly People Gather With Others to Seek God



“We must know the hour and come together for a solemn assembly October 3-10, 2021”

Savenaca Nakauyaka
Leader of Healing the Land Ministry in Fiji Islands



Will the Feast of Booths be Widely Observed in the Future?

Zechariah 14:16-19 - Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the **Feast of Booths**.¹⁷ And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.¹⁸ And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain; there shall be the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the **Feast of Booths**.¹⁹ This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the **Feast of Booths**.



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Recruiting Others

2 Chronicles 30:6-12 - **So couriers went throughout all Israel and Judah** with letters from the king and his princes, as the king had commanded, saying, “O people of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that he may turn again to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.⁷ Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were faithless to the LORD God of their fathers, so that he made them a desolation, as you see.⁸ Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD and come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you.



Recruiting Others

2 Chronicles 30:6-12 (cont'd) - ⁹ For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him.” ¹⁰ **So the couriers went from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, and as far as Zebulun, but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them.** ¹¹ However, some men of Asher, of Manasseh, and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. ¹² The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD.

Recruiting Others



Zechariah 8:20-23 - “Thus says the LORD of hosts: Peoples shall yet come, even the inhabitants of many cities. ²¹ **The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, ‘Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD and to seek the LORD of hosts; I myself am going.’**”

The Flight of the Prisoners, 1896
James Tissot

Recruiting Others



Zechariah 8:20-23 (cont'd) - ²² Many **peoples** and strong nations shall come to **seek** the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. ²³ Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days ten men from the nations of every tongue shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’”

The Flight of the Prisoners, 1896
James Tissot



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God has intended that we seek Him and fulfill His purposes as a community of strong and committed disciples. There is great power and success when seeking God as a team instead of just on one's own.



We live in the church age, and it's our role to hasten the day of Christ's return by deepening and expanding the kingdom of God.

As Christians seek God wholeheartedly, He gives grace, power and direction to be used as His instruments in our families, communities and nation.

**Help America Return to God by Becoming a Cornerstone Partner
with Christian Union: christianunion.org/cornerstone**

**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!**

Psalm 33:12



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