



Links Players

Fellowship and Community

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:37-40)

Back in 2012, four fathers and their sons planned a golf outing. The boys were in their late 20s, good friends going back to their junior high days.

Since everyone thought this was a one-shot deal, we decided to do it up right and planned a four-day trip to the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Alabama. And as discussions evolved, it was decided to have the dads challenge the sons in a Ryder Cup format.

As you might expect, there was a lot of good-natured trash talk prior to the event. The boys named themselves "Team Soccer" and immediately pegged the dads as "The Walking Dead."

Not to be deterred, we embraced the name and purchased golf shirts with Walking Dead embroidered on the front, with a different color shirt for each day of the match.

The dads lost, but the trip was so enjoyable for all of us that we agreed to do it again – and we have, annually, thirteen times since that inaugural event in 2012.

We've had the privilege of playing many wonderful courses across the USA, from North Carolina to Palm Springs, from Alabama to northern Minnesota, and many places in between.

The traveling trophy has exchanged hands several times, but truth be told, it resides more frequently with Team Soccer, especially in the past few years. But while the golf has been great fun, it's secondary to the fellowship and the relationships - fathers with their sons, and friends among friends.

We read a lot about relationships in the Bible, right from the very beginning. In the 1st chapter of Genesis, as an act of love, God created mankind to be in a relationship with Him.

In the next chapter, we read, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" (2:18). And with that, the special relationship between man and woman was initiated.

In Exodus, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. When you reflect on them, you realize that all ten are about relationships: the first four are about our relationship with God, and the last six are about our relationship with each other.

And as we move to the New Testament, we learn about a relationship known as the Great Commandment, where Jesus instructs us to love God and to love others (Matthew 22:35-40).

I heard a quote years ago that I've always remembered and been prompted to share with others many times since: "The best things in life are not things; they are relationships – with your faith, your family, and your friends."

As Paul writes in Romans 12:5, "so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." As followers of Jesus Christ, we are part of a special community.

We have the privilege of calling God "Our Father" and being members of His family; that's a relationship we should give thanks for every single day.

Prayer: Lord, help us to take these words of fellowship from Hebrews to heart: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another." Amen

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John Bown

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