



Flourishing By Gathering

I've always been a gatherer, and by that I do not mean someone who picks berries and other foods in order to eat and survive, although my husband recently started a garden. I love gathering people! I love people and I want to be with people and I want people to be with people. As you may be able to tell, I am an extrovert. But let me let you in on a little secret, we were all made for this (introverts, you too). We are called to be gatherers! As we see all throughout scripture, God scatters his enemies but gathers his people to himself. In one definition, to gather is to "draw and hold together (fabric or a part of a garment) by running thread through it." And isn't this abundantly true of the good news of the gospel? While sin tears us apart, God by his Spirit draws us and holds us together in him and with other fellow believers. As we read in chapter three of our book, "Repenting women who find rest in Jesus become lifegiving women who flourish as gatherers." (p.71).

Flourishing happens in community. We live in a day and age where we are constantly being pulled apart. Technology tempts us to be disembodied, it's common to not live close to family and we are so busy that it can feel like a fight to even see friends. But, we are called to gather, and old age is a time to press in close to community life, even when there may be many barriers. How else can we grow in our Christlikeness? As Paul says in Philippians 3:17-21,

"Keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many...walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction...and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

We grow and thrive when we walk alongside other believers; people who love God and love us. We all need others who encourage and challenge us. We need fellow exiles who are hopefully awaiting the coming of our Savior. So let's fight to stay close to one another. As we do that, we may also prayerfully seek to gather those who are outside of the flock. We are called to find ways to live as gatherers where the Lord has planted us so that many may come to know his love and

truth. Whether you are single, married, a mom, widow, young, old, lonely, busy, suffering or thriving we are all called to be gatherers. Together, when our time on this earth comes to an end we will with all the saints be gathered up and we will live forever with our King!

Kat Goss

Questions to Consider:

- Which *Growing in Grace* principle is especailly helpful to you at this point in life and why?
- What do you see when you gather with your church family?
- How are you a gatherer?

Yours in Him,

Katherine Colquitt