

# St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Penrith

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## ENCOURAGEMENT LETTER 3/4/2024

How are you today? I thank you for the death and resurrection of Jesus and all we have in him.

Today's encouragement continues in John 17 with "The Triune Community" before going on to church matters.

### ENCOURAGEMENT: The Triune Community

To what extent do we experience a relationship with God? We know that through Christ, God draws us near to know him. But sometimes we might think of it in degrees. Yes, Jesus brings us into a relationship with God, but we are just acquaintances, or friends but not good friends. We are not among his favourites. This is not what we see when we read John 17.

*"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one — I in them and you in me — so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."*

John 17:21-23

We see a repeated idea in these verses, that Jesus prays his people will be one as he and the Father are one, and that the Father and Son might be in us even as we are in them. There is a great depth of intimacy here in that we are brought into the very community experienced between the persons of the Trinity – Father, Son and Spirit. It is not that some will get to experience this and others will not. Rather, the work of Jesus to restore us to God secures this level of relationship and community with God. It is a depth relationship with God we enjoy together. While in this world we might not grasp the full extent of this nor the full breadth of its experience, when Jesus returns we will.

Jesus gives us his glory, that is the revelation of God's love in his death, that we might experience that Triune community in the way we relate to one another. It finds expression in our unity among us and the way we care for each other and each person who enters into our church. It is in that Christlike love we have for each other that the world sees a living display of Christ's own love. It is the evidence that the gospel is real. It is as Jesus says, "The world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

This year, I am being struck at how that is unfolding in our own community at Penrith Presbyterian. There are people from our Community Pantry who are being drawn into our church through the experience of Christian love and kindness. There were a number at the Passover meal. Others will attend church and/or Bible studies. New people at church are expressing joy at the love and acceptance they have been received with. I am encouraged at the work of God in us. I also see it when people in our midst are going through difficult times and others in the church will get around them to love and support them. Let us continue to strive to love each other and others beyond our church in this way, that the love of Christ might be displayed among us. Is there someone you can show the love of Christ this week?

As always, love and prayers,  
Steve

