

## Feedback Summary – Section 2

### DEVOTED TO DEEP LOVING FELLOWSHIP

How characterised by love, forgiveness and unity is your church family in their relationships with each other?

Average score: **3.1**

How characterised by generous, sacrificial giving – to one another and to the church – is your church family?

Average score: **2.9**

How committed to meeting together every week in worship is your church family?

Average score: **3.1**

Further comments about your church's passion for and commitment to FELLOWSHIP: (In your opinion, what are the challenges and what needs to be done?)

We are to love one another, not to form cliques and play power games. We need to be like Jesus in what we say and do.

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One church in particular in the Parish is more committed to meeting together

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I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA ON THE RESPONSES TO THESE QUESTIONS. THE REASON BEING I HAVE NO IDEA HOW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE "CHURCH FAMILY" FEEL, ACT AND REACT TO THE ISSUES

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Church attendees come from various denominational backgrounds with particular liturgical experiences which colours their comfort in the service. However, the fellowship is enhanced by social gatherings after church and at church activities. Small groups are encouraging fellowship but it's not for all.

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The two churches I help minister to are loving with the quirks and difficulties that are part of every family. At both churches the people are hugely supportive of each other - providing transport for those unable to come by themselves to shopping and pastoral visits etc. Coffee get togethers are common. At one stage in one church the community helped finish building a house for a lady whose husband was killed.

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especially there is a need to be inviting people into our homes, this just doesn't happen for many people.

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Further comments:

Don't know all of the congregation well enough to answer well.

Don't know the dynamics of who cares for who, or whether some are missing out.

Definitely some generous, sacrificial giving occurring.

Not everyone comes every week, seems like they take turns! A core group who always come.

Challenges/what can be done:

More special events during worship services, so more people turn up at the same time!

More social events - Have only recently started morning teas again - opportunity for deeper conversations. Just had our first "Bike Ride" since COVID - a chance to build stories together (fifth Sunday, after service, motorbike riders plan trip, invite rest of congregation to tag along in shared vehicles, for outing including lunch).

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I feel many are apathetic. However, perhaps 8-10 are deeply committed and active Christians.

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Re-question two. Sacrificial giving to other family members may be there, those who give would not say so and I suspect the level is low. Sacrificial giving to the church is probably low. As a long serving ex-treasurer of considerable I always find a huge disconnect between knowing what it cost to run a household or personal family and a very inadequate idea of and no education about the physical costs of running our church. Unfortunately, Anglican habit is never to talk about this and there is no affective feedback through the sectionally isolated Anglican hierarchy. Very ineffective administration for parishioners.

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Some age groups that is the young are encouraged and supported where as others are forgotten

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Our little church is our community.

It's our brigade volunteers. Our mental health care. Social welfare council.

Unconditional care, respect and fellowship for all.

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Tuesday morning has faithful gatherings with Prayer and praise and the challenge is they are 80 -94 in age. There are no children and most young women are working.

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Although there are fellowship opportunities, some refuse to participate with others if they have had an argument and some only participate in the fellowship, without attending the worship.

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Many older parishioners cannot make the early services in winter. Many also are very parochial; will only attend their "local" church despite a viable alternative only being 10mins drive away. Mid-week services in the middle of the day will bring many oldies back to regular worship.

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encouragement and mutual leadership

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commitment of our personal time to visit with those who are not able to come regularly and involve them in our care

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Our challenge is to spread this passion for fellowship to include activities (eg Bible study groups) outside of the Sunday services.

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We do ok in this area. We are so grateful for our Church family's financial commitment, through Covid and now through a period without Clergy - although, obviously challenged by this portion of scripture.

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We have two congregations that are worlds apart. The 8:30 is an older service interested in sacred literary, choirs and bells... there are no young people at this service, and no one is keen to join... the 10am service is trying to engage and reach the lost both young and old... I think the old people have forgotten what it is like to young...

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Most of our parishioners are very caring of each other. This is especially evident in our older traditional worshippers, many of whom are facing declining health, both physical and mental, and declining mobility. There is a wide range of mutual love and care shown among these older people.

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There isn't a lot of fellowship now. When COVID stopped morning tea, we never got back into it.

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Our church has a core of very committed members with an almost equal number of less committed 'fringe' members. Creating a culture of pastoral care outside of Sundays will help grow people's commitment to our church family.

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COVID has severely strained fellowship opportunities. We have finally come out of restrictions, however, many pre-2020 parishioners have not returned which is a great shame.

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I'm new so I don't yet know the culture well. The leaders and many of the congregation are very loving and welcoming.

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Ageing parishioners, demarcation of "family and children" as needing another service. Zoom formats with Americanised music to watch not sing with. Small numbers, lack of engaging activities such as appropriate music for children to sing and play with.

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Some have left our church and I am not sure why, but maybe they felt they were not valued or too much was demanded of them. There has been a lack of communication. Most who are still there enjoy getting together at church each week.

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Again, it is hard to know, most of our congregation are older- 70's 80's & there are people who meet occasionally for a meal together & some may provide assistance to those less fortunate. I am sure there is a number who provide food and assistance for church functions and morning tea on Sundays between services and this is well attended by older folk but few of the younger members. We have a desperate need for younger members in the congregation. We were getting some new Christians & some more committed through Alpha outreach, but they were handed so many functions on parish council and running service that there was a recent exodus - through over work & over commitment I think. We have lost these to other churches, I think. This is the challenge to get more young people in the church and not to overload them with jobs.

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I'm just 'new'... fellowship has been 'friendly' - smiles, how are you etc. but not that 'deep', maybe I'm expecting too much? the ministers' family has asked us to dinner-hurrah. But as a congregation?? (No offers to come for dinner, join for a weekend activity. only bible study offers- which we said yes to. etc)  
it's a bit epidemic- busyness. i reckon is the issue- so scheduled up, we haven't time for the fellowship described in the bible. we don't prioritise it. feel 'we don't have time'... but really, we have time, we just want to spend it making money-which shows our priority is STUFF... not people. connection. building others up.

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Again, there are a committed few who are very generous, loving and full of compassion and have a real desire for fellowship.

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Understand the Biblical call to meet week by week. There tends to be consistency in numbers of people.

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Some are working long hours or don't enjoy good health. MU endeavours to keep contact with older members and make sure a prayer cover maintained for those in need. There are a number of fellowship groups maybe there is a need to advertise to all congregations - a single pew sheet given to all congregations.  
There are some very generous people who reach out beyond those who worship regularly. There are some whose only friendships are within the congregation meaning they never really undertake any outreach or example to the wider community.  
Surely reaching out to those in need means more than only those in the church. Everyone is created in God's image.

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We have morning teas when we have visiting clergy  
Challenges have been COVID as we used to have morning tea each week  
Lenten studies were good for fellowship amongst those of us that attended

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Again, we don't always know

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Whilst there are efforts for fellowship there is a need for a more regular time to be together

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I have had to base these answers above by keeping in mind that only about four or five people attend our services on a regular basis, of which I am one. Others attend, here and there, but not on a regular basis.

Some people have left, due to hurt feelings or for other reasons, for example preaching technique, or lack of listening and respect from the lay "leadership". Among these few regulars there is love, forgiveness and unity. But not really between the leadership and the regulars. Compared to others, I am very new to this congregation, and this is my observation. I have had two friends from my previous congregation visit a couple of times and when I asked their opinion of the church/service their opinion was that there is "no joy" in our church.

I think more unity is required between the leadership and the congregation, limited as it is, especially when it comes to listening to the opinion and ideas of others and of respect.

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We have a good core group of people committed to regular fellowship but also have a number who come intermittently.

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Our parishioners enjoy getting together for fellowship and we must try to arrange activities which keep them involved in parish activities and being able to participate and meet other members.

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COVID has affected those coming to church. The cold does not help!

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There are a majority that have a strong commitment towards fellowship with each other in and out of church, but not everyone

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Organised church again. The presented head isn't necessarily the body. We need to understand the importance of the great Commission again. As you go in the world, only there will be growth. We need to kick the individualism of world to trust the body of believers again.

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As stated, we need to bring members along once we have found where they are and show Christian love and understanding.

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Finding simple and easy ways to maintain relationships over the long term. Hospitality could be a key to this.

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The groups that I associate with are very keen on inclusion and appreciation of other's talents and views i.e., choir Bible study group and other social functions.

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Personal viewpoint .... church family views not fully known.

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We need to teach our congregations about Christ Holy Spirit giftings.

We need to pray actively for these to be given by the Holy Spirit to each in our congregations according to the needs of that particular congregation.

We need to grow mentors who will work, provide feedback and Godly wisdom to use these gifting as they were designed to be used, among members of each congregation.

We need to publicly and regularly announce opportunities for individual prayer ministry at whatever part of the service, deemed appropriate.

We need to teach about the different ministry roles as found in:

1. Ephesians: 4.11: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher.

2. Romans: 12.6-8. Prophecy, Teaching, Exhortation, Giving Governance/Leadership, Mercy. Etc

The modern church has: Deacon, Priest, Dean, Bishop, etc, which don't generally correlate very strongly with first century New Testament teaching or practise.

Why after 2,000 of study, exegesis, archaeology, language study- do we get year after year nearly the same readings especially through the lectionary cycle or at a minimum the same biblical themes over and over again.

My readings of the Old Testament since retirement have greatly expanded my understandings of the New Testament.

Jesus statement that He then came to fulfill the law, not change it or abolish are very significant as with tax the collector up the tree, to get a better view of Jesus.

This endorsement of the concept of restitution and re-building of trust, according to Old Testament teachings often is overlooked in our church teaching. We take the New Testament view, that we have to forgive those who sin against us, 70x70times, and there is little evidence of restitution or genuine attempt to rebuild trust.

This is especially true, I think when we talk about the roles of early Christian churches in our Australian context, with the treatment of our First Peoples.

The Anglican church should be playing a major role in this restitution, as the instituted church of the colonial nation, Britain.

Aboriginal blood has been shed by more than 300 know, documented massacres, not to mention western disease, including STDs, dispossession, despair, depression, destruction of family and cultural life. Etc.

The Genesis story of Cain and Abel- God said chillingly "What have you done...." So too have we done all over this land. Where is our restitution as a church of the founding government and the first Christian church teaching on this land mass??? Where is our restitution? - Firstly, spiritually

And in other?? Financial ways??? The blood of the innocent cry out for the ground for restitution.

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I see many in the church who are not really interested in fellowship with other believers. After church they are keen to get home and not interested in meeting at other times for fellowship.

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I feel there is a commitment to fellowship however despite effects being made we remain small in number.

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There is a strong commitment to maintaining the traditions of the church. Spontaneous pastoral care is obvious in the parish. Create opportunities where folk can develop deeper friendships. Age and time seem to be a blockage.

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The majority of our church do get involved with fellowship opportunities. It would be great to see additional opportunities become a part of the life of the church, without becoming left to the Parish Council members.

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Just the normal challenges of life. These effect all church goers during the course of their lives. In the services (older members of the community) that I attend, overall commitment is very high.

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Again - I don't really know - God is building a strong family committed to supporting one another. ... small bible study groups being a core driver of that. Prayer & hearts dedicated to being led by the spirit are essential to drawing others in. This congregation definitely has become more welcoming of newcomers than when I attended very occasionally many years ago.

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A more casual environment would be conducive to family contemporary fellowship. The challenge is to find a space to worship & fellowship which is more comfortable.

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The fellowship that happens seems more about friendship and "God" seems to be tacked onto it. Over the years it had become harder as there are no new people attending and those of us who do attend are ageing rapidly. Personally, I do not see any future for many of our congregations as we slowly die off.

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More could be done but those willing to organise events are getting older and less able. Those events organised are well attended by both regulars and fringe members.

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Regular church attendance is very poor, I don't believe there is a strong commitment to bible teaching and the building up of one another.

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A small number of people are very committed to Coboco services

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People are committed to going to church, and then limit their involvement after that

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A comment of Q1: Are we characterised by love? I don't think so, in answering this question I have to ask myself what the character of the diocese is as the overarching example to our parish. I don't think the diocese is characterised by love. It seems to be a disparate group of people which does not seem to have Christ at its heart. It is a sad situation. It is not committed to forgiveness as some people seem to be held in contempt and as such relationships are not possible. The only way to renew and mend those relationships is to be Christ centred and we are not. We are turning from Christians who care about the people around us and welcome strangers into our midst to a club of self-righteousness. Only through Christ can our righteousness be found.

Q2. Our church family gives sacrificially but the giving is not supported by resourcing ministry properly. We are still in a fund-raising mindset and while we hear sermons to bring us from that mindset it lingers like the smell of Lazarus in the grave. If we remember that narrative we will remember that as part of it Jesus wept. Now Jesus weeps over our lack of generosity.

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Our congregation enjoy fellowship, although this has been disrupted and challenging over the past 2 years due to COVID. Much of the fellowship is in the form of morning tea after church, and participating in activities associated with catering for wakes, preparing for fetes etc. Many of us are elderly and less mobile.

Within our congregation we generally keep an eye on each other, however there is less connection between other parishes within Bathurst.

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The diocese needs to have a plan for conflict resolution, both between parish priest and parishioners, and parishioners with one another. In recent years the conflict resolution process has been very badly handled.

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Most of the time spent over morning tea is taken up with friendly chatter in groups who mostly have known each other for years. Very little, if any, discussion of the sermon or readings or Christian reaction to the news or of mission activities.

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It is a warm and friendly church. I guess... jumping straight into talking up the Book of Acts type of fellowship with our group (I'm talking the elderly service) leaves an imagination gulf between the visionary and the audience. Having said that, I guess the breaking of this down into steps / developing on-ramps etc will be the challenge

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I believe that the church's passion for and commitment to fellowship is strong and that there is a strong binding of individuals and families. I think we need to be careful - with growth- that no one feels abandoned or rejected. Prioritising Sunday as a day for fellowship -outside of the service is important...and endeavouring to make contact with individuals during the week is important.

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D O B Elderly people make up our congregation who have participated greatly in the past. The few slightly younger people are very committed to these things.

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People fellowship within their known groups. Not so strong at welcoming new or different people into their groups

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It takes a while to establish groups within groups - perhaps this is the wrong way of doing it as people tend to form cliques. However, groups of people must have common interests, not just the church. We have monthly Men's Mixer meetings and any man from the community who wishes to attend is always made welcome. Women in our church don't have a similar group, but not for the want of trying over the past few years. We do have a small AWA group, who are involved in catering for wakes, other special events, eg Pancake Day, but the age of these women is increasing. Covid of course has put a stop to many of the functions and like many situations, once a practise is stopped, it becomes difficult to restart. Morning tea after Sunday Church Service provided an opportunity to socialise, but again, Covid put a stop to these, but they have now recommenced, but with fewer numbers due to falling church attendance. Members of Wednesday service meet as a group for coffee after the service.

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Carl has quoted how generous the online attendees are.

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Distance from town and the age of the parishioners is a barrier to fellowship gatherings other than weekly morning worship. Covid lockdowns put a stop to regular gatherings and previous unique meetings e.g., garden church and lunch which had been planned prior to Covid. our congregation would love to revive these plans in the spring.

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I am newish to the parish, so my relationships are not deep - connection is slow and remains superficial generally.

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Not sure we've been here long enough to really know. There is a faithful core and a committed number who are irregular but definitely part of the fellowship.

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Fellowship tends to be fairly cliquey

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There is a lack of pastoral care such that those attending do so out of habit only.

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Some are extremely faithful and generous. We are for each other, but social, geographic and theological difference leave gaps that relationships fall through. Our town has many people who worship 30 or 70km away, and others who never gather to worship due to pain from previous church people or apathy.

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more communication and outreach to those who are sick or are struggling and to those who need prayers.

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Some are there every Sunday. Others not so regular. Stress now and again the importance of regular attendance.

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I believe we are a Church community full of imperfect human who can always 'do better'. I believe we need to encourage our community to listen the leading of the Holy Spirit to continue to grow our commitment to fellowship

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As far as giving money I feel God isn't put first other things do and He only get a portion of what is left over. This is said as at times we are encouraged to give more

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Although weekly numbers seem to be between 28-35, the internal fellowship is more with external links but on Sunday's attendance and participation in morning tea and fellowship lunch each week is 10 to 16.

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Again, the service I attend is characterised by fellowship, generosity and meeting regularly and abounds in peace and love. At the other service I would say a 1 for love, forgiveness and unity, 3 for generosity, 2 for meeting regularly, depends on the person. Challenges are differences in theological positions, people being 'busy', and there isn't a perceived priority for fellowshipping, people generally just want to go home. I would say fellowship would have to be offered, modelled and driven by the head of that service.

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Strong leadership commitment to Holy Communion services. Greater community profile could be developed.

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My observation is there are a few ongoing frictions between some members that is hindering church growth. Teaching and maybe reconciliation may be necessary.

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In relation to the last question, there is a small ardent church family group which attends regularly. We are finding it hard to attract new/young people. We have tried social events in the past (pre COVID) however it has not attracted people back to church. Online church was popular with some as it saved travelling. The teaching was good so it was certainly a good outreach to people, however it meant there was no church fellowship. We have morning tea after church so to share in fellowship.

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People in my church care for each other but as it is ad hoc some people without good relationships within the church may get missed.

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All (6) enjoy being together and are committed to attending our monthly service together.

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Our culture does not foster close personal relationships and commitments. Our church meeting structure doesn't help that much either. I think more could be done within the weekly meeting to foster "one another" ministry, relationships and support. It would be non-traditional, less controlled, and likely take more time.

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It is a very important part of our week - we always check on people if absent or away for any length of time. A lot of our congregation enjoy the social fellowship each week

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Getting to know each other outside of church. Continue to have social events that are inclusive of fringe members

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Once again age comes into it I feel. The younger ones are keen in their walk, with most of the older folk they can be back in the time when you came to church came out and went home. Though they are changing and maybe letting down the guard a little. We pray for this.

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The commitment is strong and only limited by resources, time and energy reserves of the much older members.

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Both congregations are ritualistic in their Christian faith, but in different ways. Both are shallow but in different ways. One congregant of the 10.00am service is quite immature in his faith, and he worries me. Neither congregation could be called dynamic. We are creatures of habit. Many of us don't like stepping out of their comfort zones. We like the familiar. We are risk averse. Both congregations are the same at the Cathedral and for basically the same reasons. I have found that my greatest success in my witness is when I take risks. But I also have to know just how far I can go before the other person starts to put up barriers.

On the question of love, I believe that most people are afraid of loving other people. They pull back from it in case they are rebuffed or hurt in some way. They can walk past another member of the parish and ignore them, and they do. Sunday after Sunday. They will especially do that when you seem to be different to them or to hold different views. Or if you are too old.

A man called Jason died last Saturday morning. He was an occasional member of the Cathedral. He was an occasional member of other parishes and churches as well. That includes Hope Church. He was scruffy. He held strong Christian views which were too strong for some people and so they avoided him. He lived in a tin shed. He was divorced and that divorce hurt him deeply. But it was a non-Christian who is looking after the emotional needs of his daughter. A neighbour of Victoria. Love is something that is not understood by the average Christian. That I know from many years of being ignored by many 'good' Christians. Peter Jensen included. But by Christine. Love is missing out in our churches.

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I am again limiting my answers to those with whom I interact.

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Special Offerings related to local ministries disaster relief, perceived special needs are usually well supported and the church holds a monthly market stall selling cooking and raffle that raises half the churches finances. Well supported by members and the community.

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I think we have the idea of Shepherds who have a list of people they discreetly watch over.

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Inspiration

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