**“How to Have a Great Year, Pt-2: Strengthening Your Relational Core”**

**January 14/15, 2023**

**Speaker: Tom Hughes**

Below are study questions that will help you and your Life Group dig deeper into this weekend’s sermon. Feel free to only use those which best fit your group’s allotted time.

**Scripture Reflection:** Read **Gen 2:18 (NRSV) & Prov 18:1 (NKJV).** Spend a few minutes reflecting on the passages, and then ask the group to share what stands out to them.

**Application Questions:**

1. In discussing why friendships are so important Tom said, “*You were created for relationships, isolation makes you foolish, and friends will shape your future.”*
   1. Which of these 3 points do you most agree with? Why?
   2. How have some of your friends helped to shape your future?
2. Tom categorized the kind of friends we need AND need to be: “*Partners”* – friends who help you get the best returns on your labors, *“Lifters”* – friends who will pick you up when you’ve fallen down, *“Encouragers”* – friends who will warm you up when you are feeling cold, *“Defenders”* – friends who will have your back when others attack.
   1. Which of the 4 kinds of friends – Partners/Lifters/Encouragers/Defenders – do you currently have in your life? Which do you need more of in your life, and what are some practical ways for developing those new friendships?
   2. Where would you like to grow – better Partner/better Lifter/better Encourager/better Defender – as a friend to others?
3. In discussing the “secret sauce” to effective friendships, Tom said*, “if it’s positive, it’s whatever holds it together - a common cause, a common season of life, a common commitment, even a common hardship – can become a powerful unifier.*
   1. What have been some of the “unifiers” in your friendships, especially long-term friendships?
   2. What are some things you may have needed to work through with friends to keep your friendship intact?

**Closing & Prayer**: [set aside sufficient time for prayer]

* Share one personal prayer request
* Pray that the people of CA would have or develop strong, effective friendships in 2023
* Pray that God would continue to bless and grow our “in person” attendance in 2023