



## **WOW: Word Of the Week**

**Belong**

**May 12, 2021**

Andrew Kirk recently reminded me of a song by the Beatles,  
*"All the lonely people, where do they all come from?  
All the lonely people, where do they all belong?"*

Today more than ever, the church must be a place of belonging. The pandemic has brought a new oxymoron into everyday speech: social distancing. Many are seeking meaningful relationships, belonging. We live isolated lives. The church must know itself—community of faith, community of the King, togetherness based on spiritual realities. The Bible makes clear—the church assimilates and includes all or it is not the church described in the New Testament. Studies of group dynamics have suggested that a church member is not really included, does not really belong, until they are an active part of at least four distinct groups.

The church is a place of belonging—a place where we trust one another and walk the spiritual journey together. The world teaches us to value independence, personal rights, self-sufficiency, looking out for #1. Our culture builds barriers based on a distinct worldview that exalts these values.

The world seeks distancing, closedness instead of openness, hiddenness instead of transparency. A church that understands the importance of belonging seeks to touch, draw in, include. The church that understands belonging values, lives for, and is built up by relationships. Relationships are the heart of the Kingdom community. To limit ourselves to the traditional "love one another" is to fail. The kingdom community expresses itself in togetherness, confession, forgiveness, encouragement, confrontation, sacrifice, and humble service. The kingdom community expresses its love by obedience to God. The kingdom community declares mutual love through its shared love for the King. The kingdom community expresses its love for the world by sharing the words of a loving God who sent his Son.

The kingdom community where belonging becomes reality never loses sight of its center—Christ the King—and in this focus is transformational, imitating Jesus. The Good News easily echoes forth from such changed communities.

You and I know the answer to the question raised in the song: All the lonely people, where do they all belong? They belong in community, relationships, vibrant groups, regular contact. Are we the kind of community where people will find Jesus? Where people will stay and persevere? Where people will find belonging? A community where people will find genuine community?