

---

# SOLA FIDE

---

## Before and After



Picture this. It's fifteen minutes before Sunday corporate worship begins. There is resonation of practicing praise team mixed with the muted chatters of the congregation. What is everyone talking about? Perhaps it would sound like this:  
"Hi Bob, how's your week?"  
"Tiring. Yours?"  
"Same."

Corporate worship ends and people linger in the fellowship hall with similar conversations. Bob's tiring week of battling sin is never addressed, his suffering is never talked about, there is no prayer for one another, and everyone returns home without any meaningful interactions. Imagine the repeated effects of this kind of interaction for weeks, months, and years. While this is an exaggerated scenario, I believe countless opportunities to follow God's call to build one another up through fellowship (1Thess. 5:11) are missed out every Sunday.

## Redeeming the Times

---

Corporate worship is comprised of many important components: praise, sermon, prayer, sacraments and etc. Yet, equally valuable are the times before and after the worship, as they are opportunities given to edify one another. While Christians are to be mindful of encouraging others in meaningful fellowship on all occasions, before and after worship provides a unique time to build up one another in the local body. As stated in Hebrews 3:13, encouraging one another everyday through deep fellowship is not a suggestion, but a command. The world we live in is filled with discouragements, distractions, sin, and evil; knowing this, we must strive to make the most of the every opportunity to edify and exhort one another (Eph. 5:16).

Recently, I changed my role in the praise team, from being a guitarist/singer, to being part of the media team. This opened up time for me to engage with people prior to the corporate worship - prior to the change of role, I was usually occupied with practicing with the praise team. As a result, one Sunday, I was able to have a deep conversation with a newcomer. Our conversation caused me to

## 10 Ways to Build Up Others on Sunday

1. Share the gospel with non-believers.
2. Remind believers about the gospel.
3. Look out for those who are isolated and talk to them.
4. Encourage your pastor. Tell him how his sermon has challenged you. Thank him.
5. Ask and pray with someone about their struggles.
6. Share how you've experienced God's grace in the past week.
7. Join in prayer with the congregation before the Worship. (my church meets 30 minutes before the Worship every week to pray).
8. Spend your resources-time, money, effort to serve others. (i.e. Take someone out for coffee prior to the Worship).
9. Sit next to someone you are not close to during the Worship and get to know them after.
10. Talk about the things you've learned from Sunday's Sermon with others.

reflect upon the quality of dialogues occurring on Sundays. I realized that it is possible to chat with people without having much substance in conversations. What if conversations didn't end with what the latest movie was or how the recent vacation was? Rather, it progressed to an honest, spiritually-focused sharing of gospel, personal testimonies, personal thoughts on faith and etc.? How we'd grow in both our relationships and faith! I am guilty of deferring to easy and superficial conversations myself and I suspect others may also hesitate to pursue deeper interactions because it requires effort and vulnerability.

## It Begins With You

As a church, we must learn to discipline ourselves to encourage one another through meaningful conversations. And it begins with you!! Let us put aside passivity and comfort! Instead, look to the interest of others (Phil. 2:4). The church needs people to be willing to embrace discomfort and initiate fruitful interactions that clarify the truth, encourage hearts, and stir up greater love for Jesus. This does not imply that every conversation must be centered upon deep theological issues or that there should never be light-hearted talks. However, it is to say that our fellowship should be marked by an intentional and proactive pursuit of building up of one another! Let me encourage you to utilize this coming Sunday, and future Sundays, particularly the time before and after the corporate worship, as opportunities to bless, challenge, encourage and strengthen the local church!!

-HK

*"...all the godly ought by all means possible to exert themselves in the work of gathering together the Church on every side; for we are called by the Lord on this condition, that every one should afterwards strive to lead others to the truth, to restore the wandering to the right way, to extend a helping hand to the fallen, to win over those who are without. But if we ought to bestow so much labour on those who are yet aliens to the flock of Christ, how much more diligence is required in exhorting the brethren whom God has already joined to us?"*

John Calvin

