

Title: DEEPENING PARTNERSHIPS
Text: ACTS 20:1-6; JOHN 17:20-26

Teacher: JON RICH

The Way of Paul (Acts 20:1-6)

The Way of God (John 17:20-26)

The Watching World (John 17: 21, 23)

The Work of the Church

Obstacles

Opportunities

CONVERSATION STARTER

- What sorts of teams have you been a part of? What were some of the benefits of being a part of a team? What were some of the difficulties of being a part of a team?
- Read John 17:20-24. According to Jesus, how does our unity bear witness to the truth of who Jesus is? What connection does Jesus draw between unity and love? Why do you think this type of unity is so difficult?
- Read Ephesians 2:11-18. How has the work of Christ brought unity? According to this passage, how is our reconciliation with God related to our reconciliation with others? How might this passage change the way you think about partnering with other Christians?
- Read the excerpt below: Have you ever asked the question, like Paul, how the church should relate to parachurch ministries? What have been some of your concerns? Do you think the Bible has anything to say about this?
- What are some experiences you have had working with ministry partners? In what ways do you think this may have served as a witness to others? What steps have you seen Christ Community take to deepen local, national, and global partnerships?

EXCERPT FROM: *The Essence of the Church*

BY: Craig Van Gelder

Paul was an active member of the Springdale United Church of Christ and contributed generously to the church's budget. But Paul's passion was youth ministry and his church just didn't seem to know what to do when it came to youth. After trying to work in this ministry area in his church for several years, Paul's frustration caught up with him, and he became a volunteer working with Young Life at the Springdale High School.

Being involved in this work was great. The ministry was growing rapidly, and scores of youth were making professions of faith. Paul worked primarily with the small group discipling process. But after a while, the same old issue came back. "How are we supposed to relate what we're doing in Young Life to the churches in Springdale?" Paul didn't have an answer, but he kept thinking there had to be a place for both types of ministry. He thought, "I wonder if the Bible has anything to say about this?"