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October 25, 2006

Dear North Shore Fellowship,

This morning I gathered with our elders and staff to dialogue about the vision and direction of our church. The following words from a book we are reading together penetrated all of our hearts and minds.

In order to extract a deeper sense of belonging, we must consolidate our worlds into one. Just like someone who finds himself with too many creditors consolidates the many loans into one, so we must relieve ourselves of the stress of managing too many circles of relationships and move toward one main circle. The mission is to simplify our lifestyles in such a way that we concentrate more energy into a circle of relationships that produces a sense of genuine belonging...The development of meaningful relationships where every member carries a significant sense of belonging is central to what it means to be the church. (Randy Frazee. *The Connecting Church*. 35)

Do you experience isolation in the busy-ness of your life? Does church ever just contribute to your sense of isolation? Has church just added to your busy-ness?

Church has become something we *go to* rather than *who we are*. Church has become a source of attractional entertainment and programs to keep us busy rather than an incarnational embodying of Jesus that gives us soul rest in community.

We would like to become the latter—a church embodying Jesus Christ to one another. **We hope to enjoy and embody Jesus Christ with and to one another** in Sunday morning worship, in smaller teaching and fellowship groups, in our family relationships, and in face-to-face relationships.

For many of us, to become the church in relationship will take a paradigm shift in our minds and a restructuring of our lifestyles. We will have to do some social “loan consolidation” to live more simply. We are just too busy to be meaningfully connected with one another who know Christ and our neighbors who may not know Christ.

What in your life needs to be simplified, consolidated, or restructured? To what person or group in this body do you need to move toward in relationship?

My hope for myself and for you is that we would enjoy and embody Jesus Christ in relationship with one another and with our neighbors. We might have to slow down to do it!

Remember this Sunday of the time change (fall back). Also Kenny Foster, from **New City Fellowship** will preach. Sunday night we are worshipping as a church with New City at their church building on Third Street.

Grateful for you,

Gary

P.S. If you would rather receive an electronic copy of this letter each month, inform my assistant at Tiffany@northshore1.org.

