



Dear Friends,

The most organised fun I have every week is looking after my grandson on a Friday. It is non-stop fun for eight hours. We have fun reading books, playing games, singing songs, going on walks, playing at the park, changing his nappy, eating lunch. Virtually everything he does is a game.

Unlike my grandson's parents, I have a brief job description. I guess you could say my main responsibility is to care for him. But to be honest, I think it's to have fun with my grandson.

I love the simplicity of being a grandparent. I revel in the joy of it. I laugh and smile most of the time we're together, even if he's thrashing around while I'm trying to change his nappy, saying 'no' to one of my instructions or refusing to eat his lunch. Because I'm not in a hurry, I am far more patient than I ever was as a parent. I should add, it does help that at the end of every shift, I hand back my grandson to his parents!

Having a regular date with my grandson has had a knock-on effect on the rest of my relationships. It's reminded me of the importance of having fun. It's also driven home how important it is to prioritise relationships, and when hanging out with family or friends, to focus on being present to each other instead of being on your phone or distracted by other things. Finally, it's reinforced the truth that relationships require time, and not just focused attention or what is otherwise known as quality time.

What is true of human relationships can also be said of one's relationship to God. That is why Hebrews 10:24-25 says:

And let us consider how we may spur one another on to love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

This passage is saying, if we are going to persevere as followers of Jesus, to practice loving God and others, and to do good, we must meet regularly with Christian brothers and sisters. In other words, we need to prioritise gathering as a church for worship and fellowship each Sunday.

There are parallels between the weekly care of my grandson and meeting weekly for communal worship at RPC.

Both weekly commitments have a fairly straightforward purpose. When I go to care for my grandson, I am fully focused on him. I don't take any work with me (except for when he goes down for a nap). It's the same with church. We leave aside our usual activities to pay attention to God by hearing him speak to us in his Word, by singing his praises, by praying, and by fellowshiping with his people.

Both weekly commitments also have the effect of filling my tank. Being with my grandson weekly fills my emotional and relational tank. My love for him grows the more time I spend with him. It's like that with church. Being at church weekly will fill your spiritual tank. It helps to grow your faith, love and devotion for God. It also deepens your relationship to fellow brothers and sisters.

Finally, both commitments have a knock-on effect in other areas of life. Regular hangouts with my grandson have encouraged me to prioritise and enjoy other relationships. Similarly, when you prioritise weekly church worship you are far more likely to be aware of God's presence and worship him throughout the rest of the week in every area of life.

God Bless,
Mark Adams