Why Do We Have A Great Congregation?

➤ **Intro:** tone = positive (assume doing)
  - church is the people, congregation
  - lesson: Why do we have a great congregation? – pics, because of the people – church is the people

➤ **Because we’re knit together**
  - Col. 2:2a hearts “knit together” in love = encouragement
  - Greek: *sumbibazo* (soom-bib-ad’-zo) to join together, put together, to unite
  - Greek: *agape* commitment to do good toward, the component that knits our hearts together
  - illus.: yarn is Christians (break), love is what knits together, congregation (not break)
    - many times stronger when knit, stretch (flexible, longsuffering), destroy by tearing or cutting (remove love)
  - We are a great congregation because we love each other (brotherly love)!
    - Rom. 12:10 devoted to one another, give preference to one another
      - devoted: close love relatives have for one another
      - illus.: song #643, God’s family – household of God
      - give preference: let others lead – Eph. 5:21 submit to one another
  ➤ - 2 Pet. 1:7, 8, 10-11 brotherly kindness, love – qualities, fruitful, true knowledge – eternal kingdom
    - brotherly kindness: love of brothers and sisters
  ➤ - 1 Jn. 4:7-11 love one another; because God loves us
    - illus: song #394, Love One Another
  ➤ - Col. 2:19 “knit together” by holding fast to Christ = growth
    - note: “knit together” (KJ), “held together” (NASB)
    - Col. 2:12-13 baptized, made alive together with Christ - hold fast to Him
      - application:
        - positive: each person who hold fast to Christ is knit together with brethren
        - negative: each person who is not knit together with brethren, so not holding fast to Christ
    - we have a great congregation, because each member is holding fast to Christ
  ➤ - Eph. 4:16 “knit together” by each member doing his part = growth
    - note: “knit together” (NKJV), “held together” (NASB)
    - we are a growing congregation, because each member is doing his part – youngest to oldest
      - illus.: strong as weakest link — if the young people were not strong, doing their part, we wouldn’t have a great congregation
      - illus.: one mother last week, visited Irene, took food, brushed hair, took out trash, encouraged her and lifted spirits – others have done the same, called
      - illus.: another mother last week, visited Irene with children, lifted her spirits
      - illus.: another couple last week, visited Irene, cleaned our refrigerator, disposed of old phone books, vacuumed floors
Because we are knit together in love, holding fast to Christ, and all doing our work:

- great assembly: we worship in spirit and truth, pleasing God, stimulating one another
  - Jn. 4:24 worship spirit and truth
  - Heb. 10:23-25a encouraged, stimulated every service

- great Bible classes: students and teachers, edifying and education, interesting
  - 1 Tim. 3:15 church, pillar and support of truth, good congregation wants to be best teachers possible
  - work teachers put into classrooms, lessons
  - pics: classrooms – want to know how good a congregations is, look at the classrooms
  - work students put into class: attendance, preparation, participation

- great young people: have a great group of young people, keeps the church on fire, fervent, exciting, evangelistic
  - 1 Tim. 4:12 young people very effective working in kingdom, let no one despise
  - illus.: Ed, visited, immediately embraced, had him over to houses and devo, greatly encouraged him, visited two Sundays ago, in town just a few days, drives several miles to get here
  - illus.: Michael Matthews, young men’s class, young people is what first impressed him – if they have it together, the elders and parents probably have it together

- great older people: have a great group of older people doing the work, led by effectual leaders
  - Tit. 2:2-5 teach and lead, example, godliness
  - responsible: at home and church, follow through with jobs

- great friendliness: we are friendly to each others and everyone who comes in
  - Jn. 13:35 love one another, men know Jesus’ disciples
  - Rom. 16:16 greet, holy, encouraging, stimulating, uplifting, fun – many churches not do, fail
  - most common comment from visitors, we’re friendly – makes us different
    - illus.: by the time I meet some of the visitors, they had several others already meet them and exchange phone numbers, have several members tell be about visitor before I even get back there

- great social fellowship: spend time together, encourage through personal interaction
  - Acts 2:46-47a social interaction equally important to anything else we do
    - individual responsibility, many Christians neglect, then wonder why lose their kids to the world
    - illus.: Tom and Melanie have church over after young men’s class – $, work, time, commitment
    - illus.: some of the men went golfing in the mountains last week
    - illus.: ladies go out sometimes – ladies’ night out
    - illus.: young people go out sometimes – bowling, dinner, movies, etc. – parents’ resp., younger kids
  - 1 Pet. 4:9 hospitality: qualification of elders - 1 Tim. 3:2

Prayer for our congregation
- ask one of the men to lead prayers

Summary / Inv.
- if not a Christian, missing out on being a member of the Lord’s church, family, a great congregation
- inv.