

Discussion Questions

September 18, 2022

WE ARE THE BODY



loving, serving and connecting in community

We are the Body - Connecting with One Another

1. Read Acts 2:42-47

What was the early Church devoted to?

How else did the early church express community life in practical ways in this passage?

2. What does it mean to be continually devoted to "fellowship" (koinonia)?

3. When we think of koinonia (translated as fellowship) being an unselfish sharing of possessions, giving of oneself, the sharing of meals, communing with, the selling of property to help others in need, etc - how does this make you feel? How is this different from a pot-luck dinner or an ice cream social?

4. Read 1 John 1:2-4

John is inviting the reader to share in eternal life with him and the followers of Christ. He specifically invites the readers to share in the "fellowship" (koinonia) with the trinity and with them. What does it look like for us today to experience this kind of "fellowship" that is attractive the world?

5. James used the following quotes from John Wesley, "'Holy solitaires' is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness." In what ways is it easy for us to move towards being a "holy solitary," being a disconnected Christian? How do we ensure we remain deeply connected to the body?

6. What specific way(s) do you feel you can grow in pursuing fellowship/Koinonia with the body of Christ?



Acts 2:41-47

Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity - all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Acts 5:42

And every day, in the Temple and from house to house, they continued to teach and preach this message: "Jesus is the Messiah."

Where no attention is given to teaching, and to constant, lifelong Christian learning, people quickly revert to the worldview or mindset of the surrounding culture, and end up with their minds shaped by whichever social pressures are most persuasive, with Jesus somewhere around as a pale influence or memory.

NT Wright - "Acts for Everyone"

κοινωνία - koinonia

2 Corinthians 8:4

They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem

2 Corinthians 9:13

..they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others

Fellowship cost something in the early church, in contrast to our use of the word fellowship today. Fellowship is not just a sentimental feeling of oneness. It is not punch and cookies. It does not take place simply because we are in the church hall. Fellowship comes through giving. True fellowship costs! So many people never know the joys of Christian fellowship because they have never learned to give themselves away. They visit a church or small study group with an eye only for their own needs (hardly aware of others) and go away saying, "There is no fellowship there." The truth is, we will have fellowship only when we make it a practice to reach out to others and give something of ourselves.

Dr. Kent Hughes - Acts: The Church Afire

1 John 1:3

That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship [koinonia] with us; and indeed our fellowship [koinonia] is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation [koinonia] in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation [koinonia] in the body of Christ?

I often found myself preferring the company of people outside my congregation, men and women who did not follow Jesus. Or worse, preferring the company of my sovereign self. But soon I found that my preferences were honored by neither Scripture nor Jesus. I didn't come to the conviction easily, but finally there was no getting around it: there can be no maturity in the spiritual life, no obedience in following Jesus, no wholeness in the Christian life apart from immersion and embrace of community. I am not myself by myself. Community, not the highly vaunted individualism of our culture, is the setting in which Christ is at play.

Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*,

Solitary religion is not to be found. 'Holy solitaires' is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness.

John Wesley

True hospitality comes before pride... It has nothing to do with impressing people, but everything to do with making them feel welcome and wanted.

Karen Mains - *Open Heart, Open Home*

"Researchers have found that people are happier when they are with other people than when they are alone—and the "boost" is the same for introverts and extroverts. They also are finding that happy people are more pleasant, helpful, and sociable. So being around people makes us feel happier, and when we are happier we are more fun to be around, creating an "upward spiral" of happiness."

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