

The Church is a Community!

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Observations

- Community is a word used a lot in our society for different things
- A community bank, community center, and the place in which we live
- Community defined – a unified body of individuals with a common character, or with common interests, who share joint ownership or participation in something
- In spiritual terms, community involves being involved with other believers with the point of helping them live out the Christian life

Living In Community Can Be Difficult!

- Living in community for Christ's sake doesn't just happen and is not automatic
- Just showing up at church doesn't guarantee you will experience community
- Just because we are in a focus group at church doesn't necessarily foster community

Some groups may get together and have no community

Others, however, may provide a powerful example of how we should **“consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.....”** Hebrews 10:24

Three Elements That Comprised The Community Of The Early Church

- Intentionality
- Unity
- Mission

“A Church is not a thing you do, or a meeting you attend, it’s who YOU ARE, it’s YOUR IDENTITY!”

#1 Intentionality

“And they (the church) continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
Acts 2:42

- I see intentionality here, something done on purpose, not by accident
- Intentional means refusing to just go through the motions
- For so many, “going to church” is a matter of convenience, not a matter of commitment (they committed themselves to the teachings of the apostles, the life together....) The MSG
- Our elders are intentional in their worship (accrue mileage!)
- Surveys have suggested that many in our society feel it is quite acceptable to simply watch a church service on television, never committing to go to regular assemblies
- The early church saw a need for constant instructions and fellowship with the apostles’

Therefore, essential for Christian life and growth for the early church, was maintaining the instructions of the apostles and fellowship with the believers.

“...not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing (not forgetting to gather as a community, as some have forgotten), but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25

#2 Being A Part of a Biblical Community Involves Unity

Acts 2:44,46

“Now all who believed were together, and had all things common,.....

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart...”

Fellowship Means “Koinonia”

- It means “Living a shared life”
- Isolation kills a community, and the frequency of togetherness can positively affect a community
“A man who hath friends must himself be friendly”
Proverbs 18:24
- Some companies discourage talking between employees while at work
- Your Bible speaks about what Christians did together from Acts to Revelations
(Met together, Prayed together, Shared material things together, Ate together, Worked together, Stood together when attacked by satan) **THEY SHARED THEIR LIVES!**

“Living a Shared Life”

A Christian Community Is a Group of People Committed to Each Other

- **We share our Joys (Graduations, birthdays anniversaries)**
- **Tears (Deaths, the vicissitudes of life)**
- **Fears (Medical procedures, Job losses, family crises)**
- **Spiritual Triumphs (Baptisms, confessions and rededication of spiritual life)**

The Church is an Organism in Community Working Together!

“For as we have many members in one body, but all members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” Romans 12:4-5

“... that there should be no schisms in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all members rejoice with it.” 1 Corinthians 12:25

#3 Mission

- Our intention to be a Community should be to disciple each other with God's word and share the gospel with unbelievers
- Every one of us has been called to be a missionary- which is simply to be on a mission from God
- The church has been given her mission by the Lord Himself

“So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the father sent Me, I also send you.”

John 20:21

- Being a part of a Biblical community involves missionality
- Being a missionary in community means that we live in such a way that Jesus and His church can be shared (Matthew 5:16)
- Just as our lives have been transformed by Christ, we work to see other lives transformed as well (Romans 12:1-2) We live a “proved life”
“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed, but not in despair, Persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-10
- The church cannot become content to be just a community of believers. It should always be prepared and expect **expansion**

Are You Living a Shared Life?
(In Community)

The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel *Acts 15:7*

Believe the Gospel *Acts 15:7*

Repent of Sins *Acts 17:30*

Confess Christ *Acts 8:37*

Be Baptized *Acts 8:38*