



COMMUNITY: Authentic Relationships That Disciple One Another Fulfill Christ's Mission In The Church.

June 9, 2024

- The type of community we are talking about is usually called fellowship in the Bible.

1. What creates Christian fellowship?

A. Jesus brings us into fellowship with God and one another.

...that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3 (ESV)

B. Sin won't destroy our fellowship with Jesus. It takes away the joy.

And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. 1 John 1:4 (ESV)

C. Sin keeps us away from the church and one another.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 1 John 1:5-7 (ESV)

2. What was fellowship like in the early church?

A. Christian fellowship was about gathering to focus on Jesus.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Acts 2:41-42 (ESV)

B. Christian fellowship was about sacrificing to help your brothers and sisters in Jesus.

And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. Acts 2:43–44 (ESV)

And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. Acts 2:45 (ESV)

C. Christian fellowship was about opening the heart and home.

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, Acts 2:46 (ESV)

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35 (ESV)

They abstain from all impurity in the hope of the recompense that is to come in another world. As for their servants or handmaids or children, they persuade them to become Christians by the love they have for them. And when they become so, they call them without distinction brothers. They do not worship strange gods, and they walk in all humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them and they love one another. And when they see the stranger, they bring him to their homes and they rejoice over him as over a true brother for they do not call brothers those who are after the flesh but those who are in the Spirit and in God. And if there is among them a man that is poor and needy and if they have not an abundance of necessities, they will fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with his necessary food. And they observe scrupulously the commandments of their Messiah. They live honestly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded them. Every morning and all hours, on account of the goodness of God toward them, they praise and laud Him, and over their food and their drink, they render him thanks... Such is the law of the Christians and such is their conduct
— Aristides of Athens, 125 A.D.

D. Christian fellowship was not about natural affinity plus the gospel but a new affinity that revealed the gospel.

- When Christians unite around something other than the gospel, they create a community that would exist apart from the gospel.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he

might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. Ephesians 2:13–16 (ESV)

...so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.
Ephesians 3:10 (ESV)

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:35 (ESV)

3. What is the symbol of Christian fellowship?

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:16–17 (ESV)

A. The Lord's Supper is not just about Jesus. It is also about our relationships with one another.

Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:17 (ESV)

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23–24 (ESV)

B. The Lord's Supper is more than a memorial. It is participation in the blood and body of Christ.

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 1 Corinthians 10:16 (ESV)

4. What does it look like to live in Christian fellowship?

A. Confess our sins to one another and pray for one another.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:16 (ESV)

B. Forgive one another.

...bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Colossians 3:13 (ESV)

For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.
2 Corinthians 2:6–8 (ESV)

C. Bear one another's burdens.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
Galatians 6:2 (ESV)

...we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'
Acts 20:35 (ESV)

D. Love one another earnestly.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,
1 Peter 1:22 (ESV)

E. Live in peace with one another.

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11 (ESV)

Conclusion

- CrossWinds is not a church of people who have a natural affinity for one another, plus the gospel. We are a church of people with a supernatural affinity for one another that reveals the gospel.

Life Group Questions

1. **Read 1 John 1:3-7.** John talks about how the gospel brings us into a relationship with God and one another. Do you think of your relationship with Jesus as unconnected to your relationship with other Christians? Are you guilty of seeing a relationship with Jesus as important but not your relationships with other Christians in the church? What is typically the underlying reason why we don't desire to gather with other Christians?
2. **Read Acts 2:41-46.** What was the Christian community like in the early church? What can we learn from them that applies to us today?
3. **Read Ephesians 2:13-16.** What did Jesus do that was significant between the Jews and the Gentiles? Why are sacrificial, loving relationships in the church between people who have little in common besides Jesus important to reaching our community with Jesus?
4. Read through section 4 in the outline. What is one practical way you can better display the power of the gospel in your relationships with others in the church?