

SPIRITUAL FORMATION - Week 3

Community

November 6, 2022

1. Introduction

a. Welcome

i. Today is all about community

1. Sermon series recap [**SHOW OVERVIEW SLIDE**]

a. How we become more like Jesus through Gospel Story, Community & Practices

2. Communion

3. New Members

ii. Updates on things in this church community

1. Giving update - 99.1% through 2 months

2. Vision Update - Sunday School & Groups next week

2. *What is Christian community?*

a. **Philippians 2:1-4.** If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any *fellowship* with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, make my joy complete by thinking the same way, having the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.

b. Definition. Community (i.e. fellowship, koinonia, participation, sharing) is **“participating together in the life and truth made possible by the Holy Spirit through our union with Christ.”**

i. What is the life made possible? The gospel view of our stories.

1. Example. My friends helped me see my story through the gospel. They helped me see and believe what was true.

ii. Christian community is more than just hanging out with other Christians.

iii. Where do we find Christian community? Primarily the church!

3. *What is a church community like?*

a. A family

- i. **1 Timothy 5:1-2.** Don't rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters with all purity.

b. A marriage

- i. **Ephesians 5:32.** For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

c. A house

- i. **1 Peter 2:4.** As you come to him, a living stone—rejected by people but chosen and honored by God—you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

d. A body

- i. **1 Corinthians 12:12 & 27.** For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it.

e. An embassy

- i. **2 Corinthians 5:20.** In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us.

4. What do we do as a community?

a. Weekly Services

- i. Large gatherings as a congregation for worship & teaching

b. Weekly or Bi-Weekly Groups

- i. Smaller gatherings for spiritual growth & friendship (e.g. small groups, Bible studies, groups for students & kids)

c. Weekly to Monthly Serving Teams

- i. Task-specific teams organized to meet the needs of others in our church and/or community (e.g.s Connections, Kids, Bread of Life)

5. *Why is it important to make a commitment to community rather than just participate in it?*

- a. **It reflects God's commitment to us.** His relationship with us is based on a promise never to leave us nor forsake us (Psalm 94:14, Hebrews 13:5 and several others). When we make a promise of commitment to a church family, we are following God's lead.
- b. **Commitment holds things together.** The biblical models of church (i.e. a family, a marriage, a house, a body) are all structures that collapse if the parts aren't committed to the whole (imagine a house with walls that may or may not be there next week, a body with legs that show up when the weather's nice, etc.).
- c. **Commitment is good for us.** It keeps us on good paths—in relationships, in education, in a career, and certainly in our spiritual journey. Commitment yields much greater fruit than convenience.
- d. **We receive the benefit of others' commitment to us.** No church is perfect (including LNBC), and we have our spats like siblings do but, in general, we take tremendous care of one another.

6. *What specific commitments are involved?*

- a. "I won't leave when it's hard."
- b. "I want the guidance and protection of a spiritual authority in my life."
- c. "I will contribute to the health of this body through regularly investing my time, talent and treasure."
- d. "I will unite with the other members of this congregation around our shared primary beliefs (i.e. statement of belief) and not divide over secondary differences in conviction or opinion."

7. *How do we signify our commitment?*

- a. Through communion
 - i. We receive the body and blood of Jesus as a symbol of our new identity in him and a recognition of his spiritual presence among us.

- b. Through membership
 - i. Not like health club membership where you have access to amenities so long as you pay the membership fee.
 - ii. Not like rewards membership where you rack up points for certain behaviors or purchases.
 - iii. Membership is a step in a person's spiritual journey of voluntarily identifying with a local church as *a tangible expression of his or her spiritual identity as a follower of Christ.*
- c. When we become a church member, we join the church family as part of our identity in the same way an adopted child has a new identity in her adoptive family.