

Worship, Community, Mission: What Do We Mean By Community?

Hebrews 10:19-25

Basic Outline

A caricature of Christianity...

"I would like to buy about three dollars worth of gospel please. Not too much – just enough to make me happy, but not so much that I get addicted. I don't want so much gospel and conversion that I learn to really hate covetousness and lust. I certainly don't want so much that I start to love my enemies, cherish self-denial and trials, and contemplate missionary service in some alien culture. I want ecstasy, not repentance; I want transcendence, not transformation. I would like to be cherished by some nice, forgiving, broad-minded people, but I myself don't want to love those of different races – especially if they smell. I would like enough gospel to make my family emotionally secure and my children well behaved, but not so much that I find my ambitions redirected or my giving too greatly enlarged. I would like about three dollars of gospel and conversion please, but no more."

--D.A. Carson

I. The Basis for Community (19-21)

- A. Jesus, the Great Priest (21)
- B. His Blood (19)
- C. Access to God (19-20)
- D. A New and Living Way (20)
refs. 1 Pet 3:8; Eph 4:2-6; Phil 4:2; Phil 2:1-5; Acts 20

II. The Purpose of Community (22-25)

refs. 1 Pet 2:5; Col 3:16;

- A. Worship (22a)
- B. Assurance (22b)
- C. Perseverance (23)
- D. Help (24-25)

*Here's the kicker. In "considering each other" (focusing on them), we are stirring ourselves in the process. In the process of stirring up their love and good deeds, we are doing love and good deeds! Ironic, isn't it? **Our needs are not met by focusing on our needs being met.***

"Do you really want to know that your new life is real? Commit yourself to a local group of saved sinners and love them. Don't just do it for three weeks or for six months. Do it for years. And I think you'll find out, and others will, too, whether you love God. The truth [if you love God, you will love his people] will show itself."

--Mark Dever

An additional text for discussion this week is Phil 1:27-2:11. Please read it after reading Heb 10:19-25 and giving a quick summary of the message from your notes. As you discuss the points from the sermon below, also include how these things are addressed in Phil 1-2.

^{ESV} **Philippians 1:27** Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you **that you are standing firm in one spirit, with ^done mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,**²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.²⁹ For **it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,**³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

^{2:1} So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,² complete my joy by **being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.**³ **Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**⁴ **Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**⁵ **Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,**⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Discussion 1: The Basis for Community

The Body of Christ is made up of people from every nation, tribe, & tongue with so much to naturally divide us. What unites us?

- *How does Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King unite us? (consider each office separately if it is helpful)*

[In general, and trying not to sound cliché--As we are drawn towards Him, can we but help to be drawn towards one another? Prophet (speaks for God to the people)--We are all given the same gospel and same commands; Priest (represents the people to God)--He made one sacrifice on behalf of a people, that is, God's people; King (the sovereign over a nation)--Those who recognize Jesus as King are his set apart people.

Leaders--this is a good time to make a clear gospel appeal for those present to repent and believe the gospel. *Never* assume everyone present is what they appear to be.]

Discussion 2: The Purpose of Community

In our description of “Community” (in Worship-Community-Mission), Worship and Mission come up under the *purpose* of Community. Apply the verses from this week’s study to worship and mission.

– *Worship as a purpose for community*

Review some of your thoughts from last week and then note how the Philippians 2 text flows naturally from oneness verses (imperatives) back into worship language (indicatives--v. 2:6ff).

– *Mission as a purpose for community (or a result of it!)*

In a recent interview¹ of Matt Carter, he began to describe the transition from “community groups” to “missional communities.” In it he describes how his church was finding that many of the (chips, dips, and Bible stories) groups that formed were not really forming community. The set out to find “*what does actually form community ... Biblical authentic community in small groups of people ... interesting we found the answer in some weird places...*” He went on to describe a place where he found very tight bonds between small groups of people. A powerful example he found came from survivors of E company (a.k.a. “Easy” company of the 101 Airborne in World War II memorialized in the book/mini-series *Band of Brothers*) who all said essentially the same thing:

“... I’m closer to these men in E company and I have a bond that’s deeper with these men... than I do with my own wife...”

[Move quickly through these first two...]

- *What bound these men together? Can you recall lasting bonds formed with people in your life? What characterizes those?*

[They were on mission together. They relied upon one another for survival. ... These may include people who were on a sports team with you, people who endured military boot camp together, got stuck in an elevator or on a jury together ...]

- *How are those relationships like/unlike those you are forming in your own community group?*

¹ You can watch the interview here: <http://tinyurl.com/missionalVid>. If you get a chance, please watch it. Consider doing so as a group.

[Take your time here. Are you on mission together? Are you relying upon one another? ...Or is this just another “add on” to your schedule that you could take-it-or-leave-it? ...]

- *What is our [CG] mission?*

[Next week is focused on mission, but it is not too soon to start discussing it. If the conversation gets too inwardly focused (raising our families...) direct it to the outward component of our mission. For most CGs, this should be gospel proclamation in our own neighborhoods. For others it may be gospel proclamation to a certain segment of the culture around us, or a service mission to the Body. More on this next week, but start thinking about a “missional identity” for your CG. Don’t get discouraged if this is hard to do... we’ll get there.]

- *Spheres of community*

Go through the list and discuss healthy levels of involvement.

[This can be quick... lots of deeper stuff later.]

1. Sunday Mornings [essential--primary time of equipping by elders]
2. Lord’s Suppers - *last Wed of every month* [essential--established by Christ to be observed regularly together]
3. Lord’s Supper dinners before (5:30) [helpful-- name tags... great way to meet new people... great lead in to Lord’s Supper]
4. Various Ministries [helpful or a distraction, use discernment]
 - Bible studies like women’s studies or men’s huddles
 - Partnering together for a task like hospitality/greeting ministry

[Maybe you are growing, but are you growing together? Many of these are being swallowed up by community groups with a missional focus as we transition from a “ministry oriented” church to a mission oriented church.]

5. Community Groups -- primary, growing, ... becoming mission focused...

[The best place for the essential one-anothering--living out the gospel. Are you too busy with “other ministry” for CG? What prevents you from performing your mission within the context of your CG? Leaders--this may lead to discussions about people perhaps being in the wrong group. We won’t come in and tell people to leave groups, but we need to be willing to encourage/send people to groups that form a) in their own

neighborhood or b) that are mission focused on a particular mission that this person is gifted/called to. *Those hardest to let go of are likely to be the ones you need to send, and those easiest to send are likely to be the ones God is using to teach you patience!*]

6. Hospitality – inviting an individual, couple(s) for dinner or going out.

[essential-actually commanded a few different times in the NT. Don't just limit yourself to believers ... cross over into "mission" and love/serve your neighbors.]

7. One-on-one

- single meeting, a one-shot get-together, or encounter
- regularly planned (disciplining/accountability).

[important extension of all of the above--not every conversation is appropriate for even a small group... accountability discussions, etc.]

– *Application: Helping One Another -- 7 ways*

Go through this list and commend, encourage, and exhort one another.

1. By **Meeting Together**: *"Not forsaking assembling together" (25)*
2. By **Stimulating**: *"Stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (provoke, stir up, entice)*
3. By **Strategizing**: *"Consider" – lit. "consider each other... to stir up love and good works"*
4. By **Pleading**: Just like the author of Hebrews is doing here with these *"Let us"* statements
5. By **Assuring/Comforting/Reminding**: *"he who promised is faithful" (23b)*
6. By **Encouraging**: *"Encouraging one another"*
7. By **Looking**: *"All the more as the day draws near"*

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