

Christian Norms

Life in Community

Why be in Christian community?

1. Definition of community

a. Webster: a unified body of individuals

a: the people with common interests living in a particular area

b: a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests

c: a group linked by a common policy

b. Biblical concept

i. Church—definition---“Ekklesia”

Matt. 18:18--*and I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Christians in a specific place or area (the term ἐκκλῆσία. Apparently became popular among Christians in Greek-speaking areas for chiefly two reasons: to affirm continuity with Israel through use of a term found in Gk. translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to allay any suspicion, esp. in political circles, that Christians were a disorderly group).

α. of a specific Christian group *assembly, gathering* ordinarily involving worship and discussion of matters of concern to the community

β. *congregation* or *church* as the totality of Christians living and meeting in a particular locality or larger geographical area, but not necessarily limited to one meeting place:

γ. the global community of Christians, (*universal*) church

ii. Metaphors for community (church)

1. Body—2 Cor. 12:12

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

2. Bride—Rev. 19:7-8

*Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;
it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure”*

3. Building—I Cor. 3:9

For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

4. Household—I Pet. 4:16-17

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin at the

household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

5. Flock—I Pet. 5:2-4

shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,^[a] not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;^[b] not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

iii. **Christian norms for the church community—how they live**

1. Unity—Ps 133:1-2

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!^[a]
² It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes*

2. Common faith—Jude 3

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

3. Persevere and defend faith—Rev. 2-3—churches

To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

4. Diversity of ethnicity, age, gender, gifts—I Cor.12:1-7; Eph. 3-4

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone

5. Attitudes

a. Love—I Cor. 13

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

b. Peaceable—Rom. 12:18

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

c. Humility—Phil. 2:3-4

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition 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.

d. No division—I Cor. 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers,^[a] by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment

e. Show fruit of the Spirit—Gal. 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

How to live in community

1. Structure—not described in detail

- a. Leaders—elder, pastor, bishop—Jesus the head of his church and gives leaders to represent him

I Tim. 3

- b. Congregation—believers

- c. Lord's Day--Rev. 1:10

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come

2. Activity of the community

- a. **Corporate worship—Teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer**

Acts 2:42--And they devoted themselves to (1)the apostles' teaching and (2)the fellowship, to the (3) breaking of bread and (4)the prayers

- b. **Using gifts to edify—build up-- the body**

- i. Eph. 4:11-12; I Cor. 12

¹¹And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds^[a] and teachers,^[a] ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

- c. **Discipleship**

- i. Matt. 28:19-20

- ii. Pathway of discipleship at Crosspointe

- 1. Belong—church membership, small group—Acts 2:41,

- 2. Grow—teaching—Matt. 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- 3. Multiply—2 Tim. 2:2

and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men,^[a] who will be able to teach others also.

- iii. **Venues to help discipleship**

- 1. Morning corporate worship

- 2. Children and student discipleship

- 3. Small groups

- 4. Bible studies for men and women

- 5. Equip opportunities—counseling, Crosspointe culture etc.

- 6. Ministry/ service teams

- 7. Life groups

- 8. Other venues....

QUESTIONS:

1. Other than the church, what communities are you involved in? Do you think the church is the most important community?
2. What metaphor of the church resonates most with you. Is one harder to relate to than other? Why?
3. Have you ever had someone help you grow as a believer (disciple you)? What was it like? Have you ever done it for someone else?
4. Where have you grown most in your time as a believer? What was the occasion?
5. What aspects of community mean the most to you? How is a Christian community different than others?