



Show Me Your Ways Through Community (Acts 2:42-47)

When you hear the word, “Church” what is the first thing that comes to mind? A place or a people? The Book of Acts is about the establishment of the Church, the community of believers.

In our passage, we get a glimpse of the life of the first Christians. They were from all walks of life, varied backgrounds, different nationalities, yet they held in common the love of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. They became a community of faith,

bound together by their love of God and their love for one another. These early Christians understood themselves to be united in purpose and identity, not a dispersed collection of individuals who “belonged” to a church. The Scripture states that they sold their possessions and goods and gave the money to anyone who was in need. They shared with one another all that they had and took care of each other, as a family should.

So too are we called to be God’s community by learning to live together, serve one another, and love each other **despite** our differences and in all that we do. It is so easy in this day and age to compartmentalize our lives. We create a time and space for religion, for family, for work, and for play. It is easy not to let those areas of our lives overlap.

In the context of our passage, think about what it means to be the Church - to be the group of believers who gather together to do what Jesus has called us to do. We are called to be a community. In this community it is important that we do what we are called to do, but more important may be how we go about doing those things--with love and compassion and in the Spirit of Christ. When we come together in this community, we should do so in ways that honor God. We should treat one another as children of God, meaning that we share even with those who may rub us the wrong way. We take care of each other, pray together, fellowship and have meals together, study the Word of God together, coming together and doing these things because of our love for Jesus. It is in this spirit of community that we find we can do so much more. We are able to step outside of ourselves and participate in extraordinary acts of giving and service. In community we find that we are capable of doing so much more together than we would ever do alone. And in this context, we experience the Joy of the Lord.

Discussion Questions and Reflection Activities

1. Take the word, “Community” and write an acrostic poem that describes who we are called to be as the church:

Compassionate

O
M
M
U
N
I
T
Y

Now do the same using your church’s name, using words that describe how the Holy Spirit is working through your church community to spread the Gospel to others.

2. Discuss ways in which we, both as a local church and as the Cumberland Presbyterian Church as a whole, are striving to call others into the community of Christ. What are areas that we need to improve? What are the things that we are doing well? What are the obstacles we often face when striving to live in a community of faith? How can we deal with these obstacles in a constructive and faithful manner?

3. What are some of the ways that the Christian community influenced your faith journey? Consider ways that your community of faith influences those in its midst now.

Prayer:

Invite a member of your group to close in prayer, thanking God for your unique community of faith and asking for guidance in how you can share the good news of Jesus to the whole through your faith community – women’s ministry group, church, youth group, session, etc.