

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**Healthy Things Grow: Compelling Christian Community**  
**Practicing 'Kingdom'**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - July 6, 2014**

Discussion: Community and Christian Community - what's the difference?

Community may involve:

- A shared history or ethnicity, (Asian, Russian and Hispanic communities here in Arvada)
- Similar interests, (riding a bike or a book club)
- Similar life stage development, (soccer moms, retirement home)
- Common ideals, (Marxism or the eradication of sex and human trafficking)
- Common purposes (YFC and youth evangelism)
- Common tragedies (the theater of war or cancer survivors, or delayed flight 'victims')

Cheers – where everybody knows your name - *"Norm"* and the idea of the *'third place'*

The Christian Community is different from all of these in its core DNA. The Christian Community is not about the individuals of the community so much as it is about Christ. The focus is different. In general community, the focus is on *'the gathering.'* In Christian community the focus is on *'the gatherer!'*

**People who gather in Christian Community do so to glorify God in word and deed and to love each other in Christ.**

Community on earth done in the name of Christ most likely will have pieces of mere human community – common interests, common histories, common purposes, even common hardships, but the difference in Christian community is the presence of the Holy Spirit bonding and purposing the community for super human purposes – Kingdom purposes. In that sense, Christian Community has the opportunity to practice Kingdom.

**Practicing "Kingdom"**

Practice glorifying Christ in the Holy Spirit before the Father. When we gather together as believers and followers of Christ, we begin to experience life as it was supposed to be. Not easy, but purposeful and glorious. And it looks very different to those watching from a distance. Christian Community stands out from all other forms of simple community.

**Acts 2:42-47**

<sup>42</sup> And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

We can go to the words of Christ to find his hopes for us. In what is known as the High Priestly Prayer found in John 17, we find words in His prayer to the Father that help us to know what His hopes are for us as a community:

**John 15:12-14, 17**

<sup>12</sup> "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command you.

<sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

First and foremost we find that Christian Community loves herself - we love *the component parts* (each other) and we love *the collection as one* (the church). We love each other specifically not because of common interests, or common histories or common tragedies. That's the point that makes us so different! We love each other despite having uncommon histories and uncommon interests. The one uniting character trait for us is that we love each other despite our differences. We are no longer Jew or Greek, rich or poor, male or female, young or old, republican or democrat, athletic or artsy, Hispanic or Anglo. We are one in Christ!

So let's look briefly at three great galvanizing evidences of Christian Community:

***Glorified  
Sanctified  
Unified***

The first evidence of Christian Community is that the community is all about giving glory to God as Christ gave glory to the Father.

***Glorified: John 17:3-5***

<sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup> I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

We see this in our church when we say things and do things not for our own glory but for the glory of God. I am currently writing up a press release to put out to our local newspapers for our upcoming Block Party on August 10. We will talk a lot about our church in that document, but the purpose of telling our story is so that we can tell the story of God's faithfulness and to give Him glory. And there is also the idea of being sanctified . . .

***Sanctified: John 17:14-17***

<sup>14</sup> I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

The sanctified Christian community is sanctified by our behavior. I'd like to imagine that the church acts differently than the rest of the world, but statistics tell us otherwise. What sets us apart is Christ. Christ has declared us righteous and Christ draws us toward that righteousness. We are set apart for his purposes.

***Interestingly enough we do have a common enemy and that does much to reinforce our common community in Christ.***

***John 15:18-19***

***<sup>18</sup> 'If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.***

Illustration re: Ordination – I am not categorically better or more religious than you are, more studied than you or more prayerful than you. But it does demonstrate that I have been set aside for God's purposes personally and professionally. Christ did that for me, I did not do that on my own.

Finally there is the idea that Christ noted that we are to be known for our unity, even as Christ and the Father are one.

**Unified: John 17:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

The concept of Christian community is founded or has more in common with the Trinity than it has in common with mere human community. We must never forget, we may have common interests, common friends, common histories and common life stage settings, but our community is not about that – it is about glorifying God in word and deed and loving each other in Christ. So in summary;

***We understand that our love for one another is a powerful testimony to the deity of Jesus.***

***We love each other as we are, not as we should be.***

***We share life together beyond the worship service.***

How are we doing?

**John 13:34-35**

<sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

***A vision of heaven and hell***

A man once longed to know of heaven and hell. He prayed that the Lord would show him a vision of what these two realms were like. The Lord seeing the man's devotion to his prayers granted his appeal and sent an angel to appear to him in a dream. That angel said, "I will show you what people look like in hell and heaven, when each receives their immortal forms. However you may not like what you see." The man's eyes were opened and in front of him were hundreds of people who look mostly as you and I do now with one major difference – where their hands should have been on the end of one arm was a gigantic spoon and on the other an equally large fork. These strange arms must have been five or six feet long.

The angel explained – "In hell it is a horrid sight to see and even worse to experience. In front of hell's inhabitants there is a huge banquet table filled with the finest foods of both heaven and earth. But with their long arms they cannot feed themselves so that they starve and fight amongst themselves in a world of plenty."

Then I asked, "But you said that all immortal bodies are of this strange form. What makes Heaven different?" And the angel simply said, "All is the same in heaven, same arms and hands and same banquet table but the difference in Heaven is that they simply feed one another. There is no want in heaven, only love for one another. "

Communion

***Heavenly Father we thank you this morning for the beautiful gift of communion you have offered us through the sacrifice of your Son, and we ask that you would lead us deeper in Christ, and further in His mission in the world.***

***Lord Jesus lead us, as your body, to love one another unconditionally, and to share life together beyond these walls. Fill us with your love, grace, mercy and forgiveness that we may be the community the world longs for, a direct reflection of you.***

***We ask in your holy name,  
Amen***