

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

④ Serve, Enjoy, Renew! The disciple of Jesus

INTRODUCTION | Community of Disciples

In today's passage, we can see the kind of community experienced by Jesus' disciples. 1) The community of Jesus' disciples is a community of forgiveness. The forgiveness of God is essential to genuine community. 2) What is the role and work of Christian community? How did the Disciples of Christ serve the needs of those around them? 3) How can such a community of disciples share the Gospel and grow genuine community in the world?

SCRIPTURE | Acts 2:37-47

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

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

QUESTIONS |

- 1: (vs. 37-39) With reference to the passage above, what enables the building of the community of disciples? What is the bond that binds people together in community?
- 2: By our very nature, we are jealous and competitive, deceitful and quarrelsome. Forgiveness and reconciliation are essential to building genuine community. In what way does the repentance and forgiveness offered by the Gospel help us in forgiving others and in reconciliation?
- 3: (vs. 42-47) What does a community of disciples look like in practice? What are the defining characteristics of this community?
- 4: How is the community of the original disciples different from the community and relationships you experience? In particular, what can we learn from the community of the original disciples?
- 5: (vs. 47) The kind of community seen among disciples is very attractive to people today. Why do you think this is? (Ref. Rodney Stark.)
- 6: The community of disciples reflect the Gospel through their words and deeds. In what way can you be speaking the Gospel to those around you? (Ref. 10 Steps to Effortless Evangelism.)

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REFERENCES |

Rodney Stark, THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY, pp.161, 208

To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fires and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective...services. (p.161.)

It grew because Christians constituted an intense community...And the primary means of its growth was through the united and motivated efforts of the growing numbers of Christian believers, who invited their friends, relatives, and neighbors to share the “good news.” (p.208.)

10 Steps to Effortless Evangelism

1. Tell people you're a Christian! 2. Inquire about your friends' life (including their faith, etc.) 3. Listen to the issues your friends' are facing. 4. Share honestly about your own problems and how your faith has helped you in this. 5. Suggest and lend books you've found helpful. 6. Talk about your own personal experience and testimony (including faith). 7. Listen and respond to your friends' questions and doubts. 8. Invite your friends to church events and/or community group or Sunday worship services. 9. Invite your friends to read the Bible with you. 10. Invite your friends to introductory Bible studies and other such courses.

PRAYER |

- Give thanks for the forgiveness of sin found in the Gospel of Christ and the invitation to be part of the community of Jesus' disciples. Give thanks to God again for the complete forgiveness we are given by the death and resurrection of Christ, in spite of our weakness and sin, and for the joy of living in a community of love and forbearance.
- Pray specifically for 3-4 people who you want to share the Gospel with. Think of ways you can do life with these people and share the good news of the Gospel with them.

UPCOMING EVENTS | This Week & Next Week

Gospel Choir dinner (25), Ishinomaki volunteer trip (28-31)

Gospel-centered Life② (31), Lunchtime meeting (Kasumigaseki 3, Otemachi 4), Obento Project (6)

Gospel-centered Life③ (7), Grace City Gospel Choir (80), Lunchtime meeting (Marunouchi 10, Otemachi 11)

Movie & Discussion (12)