



Sermon Notes

Term – Summer Term

Series – Holy Spirit

Gathering & Date – 16th June 2019 (The 5)

Title – Community as a value of the Holy Spirit

Preacher –Neil Shepherd

Reading Acts 2:1-4 & 42-47
Acts 4:32-35

Main message of this talk in one sentence: How is community life shaped by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Main points –

Read Acts 2:1-4

Recap of the last few weeks looking at the Holy Spirit. A gift from God the Father who only gives good gifts; available to us through the work of Jesus; an expected outpouring on the day of Pentecost as prophesied in the Old Testament.

As we read on from the Pentecost outpouring we see some values of that emerge with the New Testament Church:

- 1. Community
- 2. Power
- 3. Gifts

We will start by looking at community and I shared my story of discovering community

Read Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-35

These two accounts give us a glimpse of the early life of the New Testament Church that emerged from Pentecost and we will look at 4 components of this church:

1. Rhythms

Verse 42 describes the rhythms that the early church adopted to connect with God and each other. It describes a rhythm of teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer. These rhythms sustain the spiritual life of the community and created an environment of awe, wonders and miraculous signs.

Two examples of rhythms are:

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| B - bless (bless others both within and outside our community) | S - Story (telling God’s and our story) |
| E - eat together | P - prayer |
| L – Listen to God | A - acts of service |
| L – Learn | C – celebrate together |
| S – Sent (go and make disciples) | E – eat together |

2. OIKOS

Oikos is the Greek word for ‘home’ and describes something much more than a ‘nucleus’ family home. An Oikos was gathering place for an extended family including others workers and servants that operated as a centre for the family business. It was a place around which the spiritual life of the extended family operated and was a place open to others to come in. Oikos was the vehicle of mission for the early church and the reading tells us that through these ‘homes’ many were added to their number daily. Community for the early church was an integrated life of work, family, mission rather than an isolated church event.

3. Communitas

Communitas is a word used by Alan Hirsch in his book ‘The Forgotten Ways’ to describe a community with purpose. I gave the example of the community that has been established when on a mission trip or a

conference week. In the early church we see a community that looks to serve the needs of those around the community so that nobody is in need and is open to all. *Communitas* serves the bigger purpose rather than simply tailors itself for the current members. It cause those within to ask the question 'how can I give to this community?' rather than 'what am I getting out of the community?'

4. One in heart and mind

These new communities of the New Testament were focused on one thing – God. As the communities discovered the good news of Jesus, his grace freely given, they recognised their own need of him and the needs of those around them. Ephesians 4:1-6 reminds us that the Holy Spirit brings about unity and we are encouraged to keep the unity of the Spirit as we are gentle, loving and patient with one another. We are able to do this as we recognise God's love, gentleness and patience with us. We are one in 'heart and mind' because we are connected to 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...'

Questions:

1. What are your highlights of community life from this church, from another church context or from a context outside the church?
2. What was God speaking to you about during the 5 Gathering? Has He spoken something to you that requires some action?
3. What are the rhythms of our community? Are we challenged to develop any new rhythms by the two acronyms (BELLS and SPACE – see above)
4. We can't replicate the New Testament OIKOS but how does the integrated life of work, family and mission challenge us to develop our own communities?
5. How does the terminology of '*communitas*' develop our own understanding of community? Do we recognise the tensions of the purpose for community- is it to serve my needs or to serve the needs of others outside our community?
6. Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the NT Church was 'one in heart and mind'. Do we recognise any limitations in our own lives that prevent us engaging fully in community life? Are their past experience, fears, issue of time, that prevent us from deepening our own involvement in community?