

# Come and Feast



## Week 4

### Feasting on Community

God has always dealt with His people in the context of relationship:

Creator - Created

Master – Servant

Father – Child

Bridegroom – Bride

Redeemer – Redeemed

Teacher – Student

Lover – Beloved

Rescuer – Rescued

Judge – Defendant

Heir – Co-heir

Friend – Friend

Servant- Served



The list could go on and on! Relationship is God's desire! He offers Himself in relationship – nothing less.

Therefore, the fact that His children are called to live in relationship with each other is no surprise. The relationship He gives us with Himself, flows into relationship with others. Just as with God, His love flows down, so with us. We are made for relationship – first with God and then with each other.

Why is it important to know that our relationships begin with God and then flow to others? There are many reasons, the foremost being that our relationships with others can never truly fill the longing for relationship our hearts feel. Only with God do we truly find the love that will never let go, will never forsake; the love that makes the Beloved more beautiful in its presence.

That is not to say that human love for one another does not fill many of those same desires, but to demand it of any but Christ is to lose our way. How is that? Well, when we demand that kind of love from another, we become consumers of love, rather than servants of love. There is a difference. When we begin with God, we enter into community, as lovers – serving each other with our gifts, for the glory of God. We don't enter in as takers, using the community for what it can give us. Of course we benefit from one another! Of course we are blessed by one another, but we don't demand that the community give us what only God can give – life, identity, wholeness. Those things are given to us by God alone. We do well when we recognize that and seek those things from Him first.

So, what is Christian community exactly? In its most basic form, it is a group of people coming together because of their love for Jesus Christ. They come from all backgrounds and experiences, with varying interests and abilities to worship and serve the Living God who has redeemed their lives. Christ is the center of their bond with each other. They may grow to see their commonalities, which is lovely – or

their vast differences, which can be hard. But, no matter what, they are joined to each other for the sake and love of Christ.



**Think about the twelve disciples. What do you know about them? How are they similar? How are they different?**

It's amazing to realize that Christ chose very different men to be together in community, isn't it? Christ intentionally chose men who would not naturally have entered into relationship with each other. There were fishermen, there was a zealot (whose desire was to see Rome overthrown), and there was a tax collector (whom most would have seen as a Roman collaborator). There were sets of brothers, and those who were already friends. They differed occupationally and politically. It was an intentionally disparate group of men who came to be held together by Christ's love for them and their love for Christ.

Such are we. And, like the first believers, we are called to be one and given a job to do.

Called to be one and given a task to do together.

### **Let's read some Scripture**

Psalm 133

Jeremiah 32:37-41

John 13:34-35

John 17 Paying particular attention to verses 11, 18, 20-23

Romans 15:5-6

1 Corinthian 12

**How do these Scriptures speak to community?**

**What illustrations are used to portray Christian community? Can you think of others?**

**What do you learn about Christian unity? Where does it begin? How is it displayed to the world?  
Within the Body of Christ?**

**What is the task we are given as believers? Are we able to accomplish it alone?**

As we begin to believe that disunity among the Body of Christ is not an option, and we realize that Christian community is the context through which Christ is made known to the world, we understand why Christ has called us to forgive freely and love each other earnestly. We've already touched on what it means to forgive freely in previous posts. Let's spend some time on what it looks like to love each other earnestly.



**Spend a moment reading Romans 12: 8-10**

**What is the only continuing debt we as Christians have in regards to our salvation?**

This love shows itself not only to the fellowship of believers but also to the watching world.

**How does this love play out?**

Romans 12: 15– by rejoicing and weeping with each other

Galatians 6:2 – by bearing each other's burdens

Hebrews 3: 12 &13 – by exhorting one another

1 Peter 4:8 – by loving each other deeply, knowing love “forgives again and again” (note in NIV Study Bible) i.e. there is rarely a time when we are right to “pack up our toys and go home”, no matter how much we may want to. We stay in the Body, and we work it out, for the benefit of all and for the glory of God.



**Please read Colossians 3: 12-17 slowly and meditatively.**

**As you reflect on the call to Christian community and unity for the glory of God and the accomplishment of His purposes, how have your views of community grown or changed?**

**How does Christian community serve to advance the Gospel?**

**How does Christian community serve the needs of the Body of Christ?**

As we conclude our time together, it is a joy to know that God has given us community both to minister to His people and to reach the world with the Gospel of Christ. It is not an either or proposition, by any means. It is a win/win for everyone! We were never meant to be alone. From the beginning God said that that was not good. Yet, we don't exist as the family of God solely to take care of ourselves. We've been invited into a bigger purpose – joining our God in reaching the world for His glory! Community that is Christian encourages and matures us for the task at hand! (See Julie Gorman's book Community that is Christian).

We have people to serve! And we can't do it alone. We need each other – no matter what! And so we feast!

**Resources:**

Community that is Christian by Julie Gorman

Paul David Tripp's podcast entitled You Need the Body of Christ

<https://www.spreaker.com/user/paultripp/paul-tripp-podcast-episode-28>

John Piper's series on The Church: Living Together When Christ is All in All

<https://www.desiringgod.org/series/the-church-living-together-when-christ-is-all-in-all/messages>

Even So Come by Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4s0Zb189Sco>

Josh Diack's sermon, Show No Favoritism, <https://www.alexandriapres.org/media/sermons>