

THE EDIFIER

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Christ Community in Discipleship

By John Klassek

Why do we do Church, gathering every Sabbath for songs, prayer, preaching and fellowship?

It is a relevant question, because there are many Christians who do it “solo”, preferring to stay perhaps at home (as opposed to attending weekly church fellowship) and utilising an abundance of online Christian content.

Of course, there are all kinds of reasons for this. Some have become disillusioned with church liturgy, governance or polity. Others have experienced personal fallouts. Yet others struggle to find an audience to promote certain pet doctrines. The reasons are varied.

There are, however, strong and compelling reasons why we *do* gather each week and experience church as community. It’s all summed up generally in the notion that our coming together exemplifies our shared lives in Christ as our Lord intended.

The question remains, whether we can legitimately replicate the fullness of our potential in Christ at home and without the foibles inherent often in church life? Central to this discussion is the nature of the call to discipleship in the context of the church and, how this dynamic is tailored into the very fabric of what church means.

Church is a life of worship lived within the context of shared community. This results in being more effectively taught nurtured and equipped for service in the Word of God. Under the terms of the new covenant we have in Christ, Jesus commands us to

follow him, and this life of following Him incorporates the distinctiveness of the annual Lord’s Supper service. Instituted by Jesus, it is observed notably in community.

The very nature of shared suffering and communion in a spirit of sacrifice and service brings us directly into the heart of Christ community, the Church. For not only do we (together) proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes, but in the symbol and ordinance of foot washing, we follow Christ, *“as I have done to you, so you also do to one another”*. (John 13:15)

Thus the sense of community that Christ modelled is exalted by his own humility and service, as well as the intentional use of the term *“one another”*.

Throughout the Old Testament, we read where God’s people are called into “holy convocation” – a convocation being a large, formal assembly of people coming together. The weekly Sabbath appears as one of God’s appointed times, when faithful people gather for worship and to hear the Word. This was the practice of Jesus, as recorded in Luke chapter 4, when he selected a passage from Isaiah to read out aloud.

The Psalms also set the stage for an ongoing life of worship, where song and music powerfully convey a language that moves heart, mind and spirit. Those gifted in music and song then serve the greater assembly and so, together, we may find ourselves joyfully singing the words of an old hymn, *“To God be the Glory, Great things He has done. So loved He the world, that He gave us His Son.”*

A magazine dedicated to uplifting and transforming peoples lives through the uncompromised word of God.

We see further examples throughout Scripture of faithful leaders, prophets, disciples who became apostles, as well as teachers anointed and enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak, giving life to the very words of God. The Scripture further compels the listener with: *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* (Revelation 3:22) May we hear and take to heart!

Many times we’ll also read, *“Thus says the LORD God...”* For us today, those words aren’t a distant and past echo, but a powerful and motivating whisper deep into our hearts.

Prophets cried out at gathered assemblies, *“Hear, O Israel...”* Isaiah, in particular, was commissioned to *“Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet...”* (Isaiah 58:1 NKJV) in the presence of those God was appealing to.



Jesus taught widely, privately with his closest followers as well as often to large crowds. He attributed the authority and teaching by which He spoke to His Heavenly Father. He emphasised that the words he spoke weren’t his, but came from above. Are we also able to make that claim? Does everything we say glorify our Father in heaven and equally bless those listening?

Of course, we can’t reflect this calling unless we’re connected to

Christ. Today, called by the Father through Christ, and in the Holy Spirit, we find ourselves drawn and compelled into community – the shared life of Christ.

As many can easily testify, the church Christ is building is still far from perfect. Building from the brokenness of sin that all humanity inherited, the church exhibited major flaws and failing in the first century within just a few decades from Jesus’ ascension into heaven. Jesus’ affirming and correcting words to those seven such churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 could just as well be speaking to contemporary Christianity today!

Successive generations of people, throughout changing cultures and circumstances, are still working and growing into the holiness and vibrancy that Christ fully intended. We want to be a vibrant 21st century church! This can only happen as Christ is formed in each of us (Galatians 4:19).

The entire church is known in Scripture as the “body of Christ”, and is made up of many parts, with the whole ideally reflecting more completely Jesus Christ Himself. As we grow and reflect the living Christ more thoroughly and deeply, the internal process of conversion from dead to living, from broken to complete, from sick to whole, is manifested in the Church community as a whole and together becoming sanctified and holy.

The dynamic of discipleship and the commission of the church work hand-in-hand.

Many of us, however, find ourselves, or the person next to us perhaps, and sadly sometimes in our experience the entire church,

troublingly less than Christ-like and less than holy. We instead see a church fraught with failures and foibles, not dissimilar to our first century forebears as illustrated in Jesus’ message in Revelation 2-3. And thus “going to church” can sometimes seem a burdensome effort. It needn’t be that way.

The church can also appear to be more of a “hospital for the sick” than a “sanctuary for the saints”; both, however, as we discover, are inherently flawed views.

There are three fundamental tenets that can help someone not only find church community, and not only stay, but also thrive in their God-given calling to become the greatest and most effective they can be within Christ community, and all for His glory and praise.

The first tenet to measure where one might fit into the body of Christ is:

Can you basically agree with the basic, fundamental core doctrinal/theological statements of the church?

This perhaps ranks as number one in this equation. Of course, there’ll be lots of diverse peripheral issues and understandings within various churches and church cultures, but we’re speaking here of the main pillars of belief.

If you can adequately answer “Yes, I can see what is taught aligns with the Bible,” then we’re ready to ask the second question:

Am I able to worship there?

Is God’s word and Presence exalted every Sabbath in praise, prayer and preaching? Is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the centre of church life? Am I personally being drawn into the very presence of God? Do I experience healing balm for the soul, and the joy of knowing our

Saviour in a deep, close communion? Am I more inspired, more empowered, and better equipped than when I first tentatively walked in through those doors?

If we can resoundingly say “Yes” to these, then we’re ready to ask the third and final question:

Am I able to serve there?

With the gifts and grace God has bestowed each of us, for His glory and the blessing of everyone else – am I able to effectively serve in some capacity?

Christianity isn’t a spectator vocation. All participants of the Body of Christ have important, interdependent functions which are epitomised by service. When comparing the human body to the Body of Christ, the church, Paul eloquently told those in Corinth, *“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you,’ nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you.’”* (1 Corinthians 12:21 ESV)

In other words, we need each other. Like a branch that needs to be connected to the vine in order to thrive and not wither (John 15), only when connected in Christ will we be able to effectively serve together with those God has also called.

So again, these are the three primary questions we must be able to adequately answer:

Am I able to agree on basic doctrines?

Am I able to worship there?

Am I able to serve there?

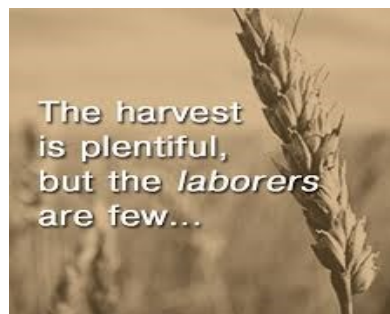
And, as a result, perhaps we can also ask: Am I forming deep friendships within this church

community?

Because, if any of these three are significantly deficient, our walk in Christ within the context of church community will not only disappoint, but will almost certainly be fraught with frustration and disillusionment. The notion of the church as being a “hospital for the sick” isn’t a state it has to stay in. Jesus offers not only healing, but forgiveness and wholeness as well.

If we liken a church to a hospital, then, hospitals are also defined by their skilled, dedicated and capable “doctors and nurses”. The church, likewise, needs equipped and capable leaders, teachers, pastors, mentors, and those in women’s ministry.

You see, Jesus began to inspire his disciples to understand his mission of “seeking and saving the lost”. He did so by asking them to do one thing. He said,



The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38 ESV)

Presumably these young men did just that. They began *earnestly* praying about what Jesus had opened their eyes to. They began to appreciate the desperate need of humanity without God, and in their hearts they carried this burden. They were witnesses to Jesus intervening in

the brokenness of human suffering with many healings. They listened to Him preaching, and over time, as His disciples, they began to see the world as Jesus did. They also would have remembered the day when they first met Jesus: *“Follow me and I will make you fishers of men”*. (Matthew 4:19)

There’s one fundamental hallmark that identified their calling. The centre of their discipleship, equipping and later, commemoration, was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Following Christ’s death and resurrection, we see those disciples gathered together. This sense of interdependency should be the same for us today.

Jesus is the head of the church. He is the LORD of our lives. And He also beckons us, *“Follow me, and I will make you...”* In His equipping, He reminds us, *“Apart from me you can do nothing.”* (John 15:5 ESV)

He says to us, *“Come to me”*. He invites us to, *“Learn from me.”*

And, as a result of hearkening to his call, we become better equipped, empowered, and more like Christ himself. Our destiny is in Christ and within His church, and is shaped by His will for the Father’s glory. The church no longer remains entirely a “hospital for the sick”, but, neither is it exclusively a “sanctuary for saints” to sequester in. Like he did with those disciples some 2000 years ago, Jesus sends us out, saying, *“Go, and preach the good news everywhere.”*

He commands us to “baptise”. He further instructs: *“Teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you.”* (Matthew 28:20 ESV)

Thus, each and every one of us in the body of Christ becomes the hands, eyes, ears, heart and mouth of Jesus. As a result, and as His disciples, we give utterance to His words, as anchored today deep in the legacy of His disciples' letters, testimonies and revelations written some 2000 years ago.

Jesus' work is ongoing. Today we continue what Christ began with those young followers, known simply as "disciples". And, fundamental to this discipleship, nurtured within the life of church community, is "teaching".

An old hymn gives echo to the disciple's plea, *"Teach Me Thy Way."* The Psalms feature numerous statements, saying, *"Teach me..."*

Recently, we celebrated 53 baptisms in Burundi in Africa. In Australia, this year we rejoiced with three baptisms. And elsewhere as and when we hear of new people coming to Christ, we rejoice at the growth that God grants. All of heaven rejoices with us as well. In fact, the joy experienced among the throngs of the angelic host in heaven is enormous, and this is reflected in our shared joy here on earth.

With every baptism, however, the work of discipleship has just begun. This is the very work that Jesus has given to the church collective. Converts are won "by the hearing of the word", often through preaching, and disciples of the Word are grown through "teaching". While the work of preaching contributes to an initial personal conviction; a lifetime of learning must follow.

The object of "teaching" is so

that the new believer begins to reflect and live the very image and stature of Jesus Christ. That is the nature of discipleship. They then in turn, being competently equipped, begin the process all over again, teaching yet newer disciples. The work of teaching must be an everyday occurrence at every level of family and faith fellowship. It is an essential part of the life in Christ of every believer.

It begins in the family home, with being a parent, and then a grandparent:

"Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them."

(Deuteronomy 4:9 NIV)

Older women are teachers of those younger. *"Older women... are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,"* (Titus 2:3-4 ESV)



Elders and pastors are commissioned and entrusted to teach. Paul wrote to the young pastor Titus, saying, *"But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine."* (Titus 2:1 ESV)

Teaching in Christ is the doctrine of Christ. In Greek, doctrine

means instruction. John wrote:

*Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the **teaching of Christ**, does not have God. Whoever abides in **the teaching** has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting,* (2 John 1:9-10 ESV)

In the context of the Body of Christ, teaching His Word is an utmost and sacred duty of the church. To this end we're all equipped with various gifts and callings. Paul wrote,

*God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third **teachers**, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administering, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all **teachers**? Do all work miracles?* (1 Corinthians 12:28-29 ESV)

This list includes teachers. Not all in the context of church are equipped as teachers, but teaching is essential to what church is all about. Minimising teaching from church is to remove His Word, and therefore effectively marginalise Christ!

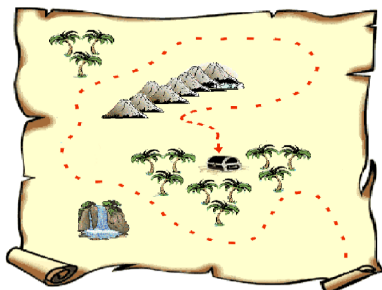
Jesus said, *"You have one Teacher, the Christ."* (Matthew 23:8,10) A "Rabbi" essentially was a teacher. Jesus is our primary "source" and reference point.

When comparing Paul's mandate to elders and deacons – the difference between the two service roles is that elders have the additional import to "teach".

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Short Articles By David Kidd

Seek, and you will find



If you have a treasure map there are two vitally important things you must do if you want to find the treasure; firstly, read the map, and secondly, seek the treasure according to the map's instructions.

What would you think of someone who said, *she'll be right – I don't need to read the map to find the treasure?* How about the person who only read the map once and said *the treasure will find me because I'm a good person?* Or the person who says, *I'm not a reader, but I hope I'll find the treasure somehow?* What would you think of the person who read the map but thought they knew better and looked for the treasure elsewhere? How about the person who understood the map, but dug for the treasure elsewhere for fear others would think they were crazy digging where the map said? No doubt you would regard them as foolish.

Many, surprisingly, adopt the attitude and approaches above in relation to the eternal heavenly treasure God offers. The treasure map of the Bible is greatly

neglected and ignored. Jesus, however, tells us only those who seek will find and the way to eternal life is narrow and difficult and found by few (Matthew 7:14). Where do you stand? Are you the sort of person who would be excited to read a treasure map and to follow its instructions to a 'T' but has a completely different approach and attitude to God's precious Word?

Life is short. God is good. Isn't it time to seek Him as for hidden treasure?

Six million ways to die

I marvel at the many strange and bold Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah that Jesus amazingly fulfilled. Whilst contemplating the prophecies concerning Jesus' death I googled *how many ways to die*. A common answer was six million, but it was suggested there's an infinite number of ways. The prophets successfully predicted the very way Jesus would die. What's especially astounding is that when they wrote (hundreds of years before Jesus' crucifixion) this means of putting someone to death was not even in use.

They predicted the Messiah would die a public death, a death involving being lifted up high, hands and feet being pierced, shame, humiliation, nakedness, mockers, mobs and the involvement of the official authorities. They predicted a death producing thirst, breathing difficulties, great disfigurement and pain – a very

bloody death involving bruising, wounds and whipping.

The prophecies of Christ's crucifixion are indeed inspired of God. Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 are great examples to consider. The reason for Jesus suffering and dying in this way was also prophesied. He did it for you and me to pay the great price for our sins.

If you've never deeply considered the inspirational Messianic prophecies, I urge you to do so as they have inspired the faith of many. You're welcome to send for my free booklet *Countdown to Faith* dealing with the greatest fulfilled prophecies about Jesus Christ.

Living at the right pace

Sometimes children want to grow up too fast. Sometimes adults are too slow to grow up. Some are quick to learn from mistakes. Others are slow. Trying to get rich quick often leads to financial ruin and family neglect. Being slothful in job seeking or employment may do the same. Driving too fast has serious consequences. Driving too slow can too. Justice may be executed too quickly or too slowly with adverse effects. When we rush, we often make costly mistakes. When we dawdle, others depending on us suffer loss. If someone is drowning we hurry to rescue them. Are you living your life at the right pace?



Continued on the next page.

The Bible is full of instruction about living at the right pace. We are told to be swift to hear and slow to speak. Jesus said to agree with your adversary quickly on the way to court lest the court punish you. We are not to speak rashly or hastily when we pray to God. We are to be quick in keeping our vows. With multitudes around us drowning spiritually we should hasten to bring them the good news of the gospel of salvation.

We are also warned Jesus will come swiftly at an hour we do not expect when we will not have time to get ready to meet Him. May we delay no more in entering a saving relationship with Him. May we be quick to heed His words and quick to repair our relationship with Him if it is broken.

Written by David Kidd

Continued from page four

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (Titus 1:9 ESV)

Part of our church's Ten Point Vision is, "Committed to Discipleship" – to making disciples of Jesus.

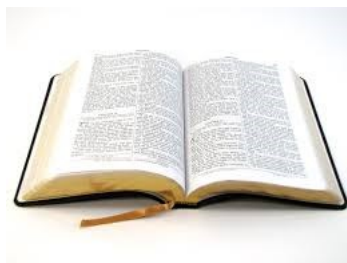
This takes the form of teaching the Word of God. Training, empowering and making more disciples, firmly rooted and equipped in the Word of Life.

Take seriously the stewardship of the many service opportunities that Christ community has. Seek new opportunities or develop

ministries that serve the way God has gifted you. After all, we're all teachers by our example, followed then by what we say. And, as we're called upon to share a word among fellow believers, be it in a church service, Bible study, or prayer meeting, remember one thing. Keep our thumb and our heart anchored in the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God. Pray about the things He wants you to pray about. Ask that the Holy Spirit guide and prompt you. Let His words become your words.

May we hold dear the Psalmist's plea:

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:14 ESV)



May we be Christ-centred and Bible-based in all our teachings. May our words be Spirit-formed – uttering Christ's own words. The church then, as well as our personal life, will reflect the Apostle Paul's encouragement:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(Colossians 3:16-17 ESV)

That's Church!

That's Christ community!

That's where God has placed, disciplined, and graced us!

That's where we belong, and where our work begins!

Written by John Klassek



A BELL IS NOT A BELL UNTIL
WE RING,

A SONG IS NOT A SONG UNTIL
WE SING,

A KINGDOM IS NOT A KINGDOM
UNTIL YAHSHUA MESSIAH IS
OUR KING!

By Lucien De Bruin

Editor's note: Lucien wrote in his letter to me, that we live in a time of perversion where "Trans Gender" changes and "Same Sex Marriage" are accepted as normal and are supported by Leaders of Government. But Lucien also stated that there will be a time in the future where Christ will return as King and set up His Kingdom Paradise, where these perversions will not be tolerated for a moment. *I look forward to that day!*

2018 Australia General Conference



The 2018 Australian General Conference was held in Adelaide, between the 9th and 13th of January. We were very blessed to have guest speakers from overseas, such as Pastor Kung from Myanmar, Elder David Kidd and his wife Angella from New Zealand. Also Elder John Klassek, IMC Secretary from Perth.

The theme of the conference was "Christ Centred" and "Spirit Formed". The sermons captured the essence of the conference theme and the praise and worship to God and His Son was an uplifting experience for all who shared in it.

For the first time meals were provided to all who attended the conference. Breakfast, lunch and dinner times brought wonderful sharing moments and the fellowship among the brethren will not be quickly forgotten.

The youth held a games evening where they roped in some of the adults to compete with the youth. The spectators couldn't stop laughing at the antics of the adults. It was a wonderful evening!

The overwhelming consensus from the brethren who attended the 2018 Conference, agreed it was the best conference they had attended!



To watch the sermons from the conference and to see more of the photos, please go to our church website.

www.cog7aus.com



THE U IN JESUS

Before U were thought of or time had began,
God stuck U in the name of His Son.

And each time U pray, you'll see it's true,
You can't spell out JesUs and not include U.
You're a pretty big part of His wonderful name,
For U, He was born; that's why He came.

And His great love for U is the reason He died.
It even takes U to spell crUcified.

Isn't it thrilling and splendidly grand
He rose from the dead, with U in His plan?

The stones split away, the gold trUmpet blew,
And this word resUrrection is spelled with a U.

When JesUs left earth at His Upward ascension,
He felt there was one thing He just had to
mention.

"Go into the world and tell them it's true
That I love them all—Just like I love U."

So many great people are spelled with a U,
Don't they have a right to know JesUs too?

It all depends now on what U will do,
He'd like them to know ,
But it all starts with U,
Will YOU pass it on.

By Max Tabone



**Thursday evening,
March 29th, 2018**

*Therefore when you come together in one
place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper .*

1 Corinthians 11:20

*For I received from the Lord that which I
also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus
on the same night in which He was betrayed
took bread; 24 and when He had given
thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat;
this is My body which is broken for you; do
this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same
manner He also took the cup after supper ,
saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My
blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in
remembrance of Me."*

1 Corinthians 11: 23-25

**Please send for the free booklet on the
Lord's Supper**

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