

## God's Love Goes Out - Fellowship

Scripture: Acts 2: 42-47

Date: July 12, 2020

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### ACTS 2 CHURCH - TEXT

Maranatha CRC has been on a journey the past six months seeking clarity of who God is and who we are to Him. The past few weeks we've been directing our search at the church - who it is, why it is and what it does. We've been looking at Acts 2: 42-47 and how that impacts our church of Maranatha CRC here in 2020. We've been using a building as a metaphor to represent the different aspects of how we live church.

We began with the understanding that worship is a foundation of our awareness of who God is and what God has done and that revelation leads us to worship. We next saw a link to the framework of the structure where growth of who God is and who we are stems out of this revelation.

#### DEVOTED

The Acts 2 text showed a common thread with each component in that the early church was devoted. Devoted in a steadfastness, a determination, a commitment to growing in their understanding of who Jesus was and to worship this Jesus in their homes and in the temple.

#### KOINONIA

This week we will look at the concept of Fellowship which in verse 42 of Acts 2 is found in the Greek word – *Koinonia*. This word speaks of fellowship but it has more than a social connection as its understanding. It speaks into the common factor that people share in life. It speaks into a sharing between people and it speaks into a willing contribution with others. The word has an active aspect within it where there is partnership and participation.

#### 2020 CHURCH – LIFE

Here at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church in Calgary we define ourselves with a strong belief in fellowship. Many are linked within family groups and many have been a part of this church family their entire lives. There is a joy of connecting together during church and after church.

### **KOINONIA IN CRISIS**

#### CHANGES

It would be nice to say – that Fellowship is a common thread in families and churches. That people get established in their world, their church, their work or school places, their neighbourhoods etc. and they grow deeper in relationship with the people they meet there. But that isn't the case

The average American moves 11.5 times in their life creating new opportunities – for some – and new angst – for others. I’ve moved 11 times BEFORE marriage and then 3 more times after that. In other words – I have become friends with my suitcase!!

In the last few months, we’ve lost the ‘normal’ integrity of fellowship with Covid 19 impacting how we connect with family and friends and co-workers and class mates. It’s as if we’ve gained the stress of moving but without any change of scenery.

#### CONSEQUENCES

As a result, many people find themselves at a loss, they feel unsettled, they feel displace. If home is where you hang your hat – there is no place to hang your hat – or your clothes! The promise of fellowship becomes superficial more than sacred and many people lose the trust of the possibility of friendship or the permanence of fellowship. All too often they find themselves feeling – being – left outside in a world that strives for immediate if not only temporary satisfaction.

#### **KOINONIA IN CHRIST**

##### COVENANT

In the midst of such brokenness and disrepair God continues to move, to speak and to act. God promised a man named Abraham that He would be His God – and through Him to all of Abraham’s descendants. Descendants of blood but also of faith. God was covenanting - promising - a fellowship with Abraham.

##### CHRIST

The Hebrews text today speaks of God’s actions through Jesus Christ. That while we were separated from God because of our sinful rebellion God did not abandon his covenant promises but reached out into the creation – through Jesus – to make redemption and reconciliation possible.

The fellowship with God that we rejected – and still do through our selfish and independent spirits – God overcame to forgive us and make us new creatures with a new potential and a new future !!

#### **KOINONIA IN COMMUNITY**

##### FOUND

This calling from God was an invitation to move from the outside to the inside. To move from being lost to being found – in Christ. No longer did we have to stay outside we could become a part of God’s family and have true Fellowship with our creator – as we were made to!

Fellowship is more than just with each other on a human level. We are first and foremost are called into a fellowship with God. 1 Corinthians 1: 9 speaks of the fellowship with Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 13: 14 speaks of the fellowship with the Holy Spirit. This koinonia word is used in these references indicating a deeper connection, a sacred connection that requires participation - from God and from us.

**FED**

The Acts 2 text speaks of how the community of saints also enjoys a horizontal fellowship. They have become devoted to Jesus and they have become devoted to other Jesus followers. The Acts 2 text speaks to their unity – their commonality – their koinonia(ness) in vs. 43 – Everyone (without exception) and in vs. 44 – ALL the believers.

They broke bread together which was in all likelihood a participation in the Lord's Supper – Jesus' last supper – communion. But also the likely component of simply eating together. Community often grows deeper through shared experiences and meals are frequently the way this happens the best.

The Hebrews text in vs 25 speaks of the body of Christ encouraging each other. They – in their collective gathering – were called to encourage and to empower one another. God created all of creation and His fingerprints are all over it but His call isn't just to be near to Him – it's also to be near to each other. God also created the church to be a place where He would be revealed and to be a place where He would be rejoiced in.

**FURNISHED**

Fellowship with God might be best illustrated as the furnishings within a room. If worship is the foundation and if discipleship is the framework then the furnishings are the fellowship. The furnishings are those objects that make the room a comfortable space to rest and rejoice. Chairs, tables, pictures etc. are all furnishings that help make us comfortable and allow us an ease to engage each other with greater trust and love.

**APPLICATION / CONCLUSION****GOD'S LOVE GOES OUT**

This church structure is part of the story of God at work in the world. God's love goes up speaks of the Ascension of Jesus from the earth to the right hand of God in heaven. God's love waited in prayer and preparation for the power of the Holy Spirit. God's love came down – Pentecost – but not just limited to one day!!

But God's love also goes out - through worship, through discipleship and now through fellowship. Where God's love for us is mirrored in our love for each other.

**MCRC MINISTRIES - MEMBERSHIP**

Maranatha YYC often celebrates this ministry of Fellowship with times – Covid 19 permitting – after worship of coffee, refreshment and conversation. Each month we also celebrate the potluck meal of soup and/or buns where we can engage in longer and deeper conversations of life and faith. We are intentional about celebrating birthdays and other milestones

We look ahead to how we can continue to grow closer together in this digital era and how we might strengthen our engagement when we are able to connect more face to face. Those ministry opportunities for us – in us and eventually through us to the world around us (more next week!!) are God's calling to us in Koinonia!