

How Jesus Did Church – Fellowship, part 1  
Luke 8:19-21 & 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

- I. Let's get a quick refresher course on the five purposes of the church by looking at our mission statement.
  - A. It says: "We are building the family of Christ, a community who lives a life of love just as Christ loves us. As followers of Christ we: *Worship* God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; *Share* God's love with the Frederick community and the world; *Build* Godly relationships; *Grow* to be more like Christ through discipleship; *Serve* actively in the church; all to the glory of God.
  - B. In that short mission statement are the purposes that God gave to the church. They are found in five key words:
    - 1) Worship – our weekly celebration of Christ.
    - 2) Share – missions and outreach in our community.
    - 3) Build – our fellowship, our connection to one another.
    - 4) Grow – growing to be like Christ or discipleship.
    - 5) Serve – giving of ourselves for the kingdom of God, our ministry.
  - C. The toughest one for me to get a handle on is the third one – Building Godly relationships. The purpose of fellowship.
    - 1) Worship, Sharing, Discipleship, Service – I get that. But, fellowship?
    - 2) I like to think I can go it alone. {"Just you and me, Jesus."}
    - 3) So I don't always put the emphasis I should on my relationships – my ties – to other believers.
    - 4) Those are ties that I can sometimes take for granted.
  - D. Jesus had a very different idea about the importance of the bonds he made with his disciples and his followers.
    - 1) Luke 8:19-21 – Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice."
    - 2) At first blush, doesn't that sound kind of harsh?
    - 3) I think Jesus is making an important statement here. Not so much against his mother and brothers but in favor of another set of relationships – in favor of the fellowship of believers.
      - a) This is the hallmark of the way Jesus did church; especially the way Jesus did fellowship in the church.
      - b) Fellowship between believers in the church is something altogether different, altogether distinct than any earthly relationship can hope to be.
- II. Jesus behaves as though the strongest ties we have are the ties of fellowship in the church.
  - A. He devotes himself to the teaching and the development of a small group of disciples, most notably 12 men.
    - 1) They live together, eat together, travel together.
    - 2) They hang on every word he speaks.
    - 3) Their greatest desire is to be like him.
  - B. In Acts 4, Peter and John are before the Sanhedrin and they are warned (commanded) not to preach in Jesus' name. They are threatened!

- 1) Peter and John thumb their noses at the Sanhedrin (the Supreme Court).
  - 2) Acts 4:19-20 says <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. <sup>20</sup> For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."
- C. Peter and John believed that their ties to Jesus were stronger than their ties to their culture, their society, even the law of the Land. How could they do that?
- 1) Because they learned it from Jesus.
  - 2) Luke 14:26-27 – <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.
  - 3) Nothing else should be stronger than the ties we have to Christ and the ties we have to each other.
- III. In 1 Corinthians, Paul tells us that the closest ties we have are the ties of fellowship.
- A. How much closer can you get than being one and the same?
- 1) 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 says, <sup>12</sup> the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
  - 2) Look at that verse carefully – we are (together) one body.
    - a) We have one Spirit in one body.
    - b) We all have one Spirit to drink.
  - 3) It just doesn't get closer than that, does it?
- B. Paul seems to think that the bonds of the fellowship of believers are closer than any other – bonds of blood, vows made, common experiences – nothing measures up. How can he say that?
- 1) Because he learned it from Jesus.
  - 2) John 17:20-23 – <sup>20</sup> "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.
    - a) The most common word in that passage – one.
    - b) Jesus' refrain – over and over again – is that we are one.
  - 3) What can be closer than many becoming one?
- IV. And now, back to Luke 8 - <sup>19</sup> Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. <sup>20</sup> Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." <sup>21</sup> He replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." – Luke 8:19-21.
- A. The deepest ties, the closest ties, the strongest ties are the ties between followers of Jesus.
- 1) I love my mom – but I love Jesus more.
  - 2) I love my kid's – but I love Jesus more.
  - 3) And because I love Jesus, the things that mattered to Jesus the most matter to me more than anything else.

B. What mattered to Jesus were the ties that bound his followers together.

C. What does that mean?

- 1) I want to be with the people of God.
  - a) Hang out.
  - b) Be around.
  - c) Rub up against.
- 2) I want to worship, serve, and pray with the people of God.
  - a) My life in Christ must be a life in community.
  - b) There is no I, there is only us.
- 3) I want to learn from and teach the people of God.
  - a) I am blessed to be a blessing.
  - b) Iron sharpens iron.
- 4) He is the vine, we are the branches.
  - a) Branches – plural, more than one.
  - b) A tree (a vine) with one branch – is dead or dying.

D. I'm not talking about schmoozing, superficial/how's the weather relationships.

- 1) I'm talking prayer partner, Sunday school, service project, VIM team, serving list kind of relationships.
  - a) Isn't that a little radical, a little crazy?
  - b) Yup. Cool isn't it?
  - c) Jesus is calling us to radicalize our relationships
- 2) We need to be in relationships that make a difference for the ONE who made all the difference.
- 3) May our strongest ties, our closest ties, and our deepest ties be with those who hear God's word, and put it into practice.