

The Community of Saints

Bible Class for 05-10-20

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In Old Testament worship, sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins is central, so that people could stand in the presence of a Holy God. Central to the worship of God's people in the New Testament is the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, through Whom we have access to God. The service begins with our baptismal name and brings through Word and Sacrament God's gifts of forgiveness and life.

Restrictions on in-person gatherings have made many appreciate being part of a community of believers. We look forward to being together again! Today, we look at the meaning of "Fellowship."

1. Fellowship as a Gift

Read Genesis 2:18

Ephesians 2:19-22

What do these say about the Creator's design for us?

While we have individual value, we are designed not to be alone or solitary.

Read Acts 2:41-42

Where does Christian fellowship begin? *In baptism*

What does Christian fellowship revolve around? *Word, prayer, Supper*

Read 1 Corinthians 1:9

1 Corinthians 12:13, 27

How do these passages confirm what is said in Acts?

Read 1 John 1:3, 6, 7

2 Corinthians 13:14

What brings about fellowship with God? *Faith in Christ*

How is this connected to fellowship with the church? *Faith in Christ unites us, even if other things distinguish us.*

2. What is Fellowship?

Read 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

The Greek word “*koinonia*” is translated *communion, participation, sharing*

Luther on this passage: “Finally, *koinonia* here means the common possession in which they all participate and share, viz. something which has been given to them all in common” (AE 37:353).

How does this understanding shed light on the “communion (*koinonia*) of saints” we confess in the Apostles’ Creed?

We are all partakers of God’s grace in Christ; we share in His gifts of forgiveness, faith, and community.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

Romans 12:12-13

Hebrews 13:15-16

Why do Christians care about the needs of others?

How does describing Christian love as sacrifice fit into the early Christians’ understanding of Temple worship?

3. Reflection:

Which of the following best describes a congregation?

The essence of congregations is having like-minded people voluntarily come together to carry out common purposes.

The essence of congregations is God giving gifts that bring different people into fellowship with Him and with each other.

4. Next Week: The Life and Blessings of Fellowship