

The Community of Saints

Bible Class for 05-24-20

Immanuel, Seymour, Pastor Ralph Blomenberg

+++

Introduction: *In addition to concerns about physical health, there is evidence of negative effects of the coronavirus pandemic on social and mental health. Are people leery about being around a community? Do they feel isolated and alone? What does Scripture have to say about the nature and benefit of the community of the church?*

1. The Life of Fellowship: Opposites working together

Read Galatians 3:26-28

What are some “opposite” pairs that Paul mentions?

What are some “opposites” that are represented in our congregation?

Why is this a strength, not a weakness, in God’s design?

What might we lack as a community if we were all alike?

2. The Give and Take of Community

Read Ephesians 4:11-13

How have gas stations changed over the years? *Instead of full-service, where someone put in gas, washed the windshield, and checked the oil and tires, you do it for yourself.*

Is God’s design for His community full-service or self-service? *In God’s design, we are served by those He sends, and we are to serve each other.*

Romans 10:14-15

How do these words remind us that spiritual life is not self-served?

What would be the danger of a self-serve faith?

According to these passages, what role has a “preacher” in the church?

What roles do the hearers have?

John 20:19-23

What is the peace of which Jesus is speaking? *Our sins are forgiven!*

What authority is given here, and by Whom, and to whom?

Jesus gives them authority to forgive sins in His name, bringing peace

How does this still happen in the community of saints today?

Pastors speak Jesus's words of forgiveness to the church, and individuals are authorized to speak forgiveness in Jesus's name to other individuals.

What is the connection between His breath, words, and the Spirit?

He breathes on them the Holy Spirit, who will empower them – and us.

Matthew 28:16-20

What was the authority given to Jesus?

What authority is given by Jesus, and to whom?

What exactly is to be done, and how, where, when, and to whom?

Make disciples – learners and followers of Jesus – of all nations by baptizing in the Triune name and teaching His Word

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

What is this ministry of reconciliation about?

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10

What other names are used here for the community of saints?

What were commonly known roles of priests? *Sacrifice, intercession*

Does this authorize all to exercise pastoral functions? *No – other parts of Scripture speak to the pastoral office, like Ephesians 4, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. This passage speaks to the reality that all of the community is authorized to pray for others and to bring their lives as living sacrifices to the Lord's service.*

3. Reflection:

How is the current emphasis in our culture on individuality both a challenge and an opportunity for the church?

4. May 31: Not Alone!