

BREATHING CORPORATELY (PART TWO) ACTS 2:37-47

A Community is a group of people who live in the same area. In our case, our group is made up of people who have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior.

I. OUR COMMUNITY STARTS WITH CHRIST (Acts 2:38-41)

- A. We have no true faith based community without Christ. Jesus Christ is the center or essence of why we have faith, so it starts with Him.
- B. In Christ, community lordship should be displayed among us. If not, we are just another club, gang, or clique driven by the flesh.

"For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. (2nd Corinthians 4:5) (2nd Peter 1:4-9...His Divine Nature)

II. WE ARE DEVOTED TO BREATHE CHRIST'S TEACHINGS (Acts 2:42)

- A. A Christ community is devoted to His teaching, and this devotion moves us to have the mind of Christ.
- B. What does it mean to have the mind of Christ? (Answer: Having the mind of Christ means sharing the plan, purpose, and perspective of Christ, something that all believers possess.
Having the mind of Christ means we understand God's plan in the world—to bring glory to Himself, restore creation to its original splendor, and provide salvation for sinners, It means we identify with Christ; purpose, "to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10) and to display His love.
And we must understand and accept that in identifying with Christ, we will encounter suffering in some fashion or form. (Being a true "living sacrifice" Romans 12:1; 2nd Timothy 3:12)
- C. True devotion to Christ guides us into the truth. (John 16:13)
" But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. **(And we should display this truth among one another.)**

III. WE ARE DEVOTED TO FELLOWSHIP (Acts 2:42) (Koinonia is Greek word for fellowship)

- A. This fellowship includes **certain characteristics**:
 - 1. Fellowship involves **a personal relationship with God** (1st John 1:3)
 - 2. Friendships are developed, **not cliques**.
 - 3. When we fellowship, it should deepen our **common vision, goals, and priorities**.
"God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1st Corinthians 1:9-10)
 - 4. The fellowship atmosphere should be a harmony of celebration. To have meals together, since **eating together is a sign of unity**.
- B. Breathing corporately should foster a community that is friendly. (John 13:34-35; Proverbs 17:17; Romans 12:13)
- C. People will come to know our community by our sincerity of Christ-like love and friendliness, not cliques.
- D. We will be known in the community of Maple Heights and beyond as the "Fruit of the Loom" Church!

(Galatians 5:22-23) " But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such, there is no law."

E. Fellowship should move us to provoke one another unto love and good works for Christ. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

IV. WE ARE DEVOTED TO BEING A PRAYING COMMUNITY (Acts 2:42)

- A. Prayer is a constant characteristic of Christ's community.
- B. We pray to keep in constant contact with our Savior, to keep in line with His purpose and His Kingdom agenda.
- C. A praying community in Christ truly thrives and stays together in unity.
"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. (Ephesians 6:18)
"...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." (Colossians 3:13)

V. THE AWE OF GOD IS DISPLAYED AS WE BREATHE CORPORATELY (Acts 2:43-47)

- A. In the midst of our devotion to God's Word, to fellowship, prayer, and having meals together in unity, something happens. We will have things in common with one another. No division will be identified with our assembly, and no cliques, but a unity of heart, mind, and soul. (Phil. 1:27)
- B. We become interested in the welfare of others, rather than focus on ourselves. When we ask "how you are doing"? it's not a passing suggestion, but a caring concern to encourage.
- C. Because of the unity they had favor with all people. Why? (Acts 5:12-16) Key phrase v.13 "hold them in high esteem." People will have a great respect for the Christ community because of the Christ-like love that is being displayed in (koinonia) administered in unity.
- D. When God shows up, awesome and wondrous things will happen. God the Creator will add to our number, and we must be ready to share the Kingdom message of Christ. ("Learn the Art of Fishing") (John 3:16) (Romans 5:8)

Breathing corporately moves us to identify to the world what Christ is truly all about. Our fellowship should reveal God's love for people, put us far apart from the world's view of cliques, clubs, and gangs, and point people to have an encounter with their Creator.

Minister Rayfield Benton Jr., 11/26/17



BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How is your time of fellowship with other believers? Does anything hinder you from it?
2. How does the view that every believer is to minister affect the fellowship of the body?
3. How can you develop heartfelt compassion for others if you don't like being with them?