

Week Seven: April 8, 2020 – April 14, 2020



HIS COMMUNITY

I am participating in a community of followers of Jesus on mission to the world.

With most of the world sent to their room, there may have been few occasions when people had a greater longing for community. While we continue to practice physical distancing to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus I think we have been finding that we can practice community through other means than in-person contact.

As we begin this study of community, we are in Holy Week. For many this is usually a time that includes many church and family gatherings. Obviously, this is going to be very different this year. However, instead of quashing opportunity for community, this new situation might give us an entirely new insight into what community looks like.

We might need to be creative to practice community, but the good news is that physical distance does not completely block our available options. Those who have good friends who live far away know that communication over the phone or by online connections can have all the blessing of getting together, except that in-person visits sometimes include food.

Jesus is the keystone of Christian Community. He is at the right hand of the Father interceding for us, but He is only a whisper away. While we think of ways that we can practice community, let us not forget the one who has enabled us to be a community. In our interactions this week, let us share Jesus.



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Have you ever watched young children playing together and realized that they were actually not playing with each other but simply playing in close proximity to one another? Sadly, that describes many of our social interactions when we get older as well. People tend to live in proximity to one another instead of living in community with one another.

In the days when pioneers were settling our region, they experienced community as a requirement of survival. Not only did they find their needs fulfilled through the skills of others in the community, but they also found their place in the community as they used their skills to contribute to the whole. Perhaps our present experience will reawaken some of this community reliance. Regardless, there is an application here for our understanding of Christian community.

John 13:21-32; Hebrews 12:1-3

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Let's Get Personal:

Have you ever experienced community? What was different about that experience that you identify as 'community'? What are some ways that you can contribute to the community experience of other people? What were some ways that Jesus built community with his disciples?

My Reflections

LISTEN – What did God say to me?

TRUST – What do I have to believe in order to act on this?

OBEY – What are some ways that I should act on this?



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The apostle Paul understood that the community of Jesus had a fundamentally different character than other communities. The followers of Jesus exhibited humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance and love. With these characteristics they stood out and note was taken that they had been with Jesus who had also exhibited these characteristics.

Today is “Maundy Thursday.” Jesus’ washing the feet of His disciples and the Last Supper are both aspects of this occasion. While we are not able to gather for it, would you be able to gather those who are in your immediate circle of exposure (that is an interesting way to express community) and celebrate the Lord’s Supper? Perhaps you could also serve one another. While that might include literally washing one another’s feet, you can certainly do so figuratively.

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19; Exodus 12:1-14; John 13:1-17, 31b-35;

Let’s Get Personal:

When Jesus met with his disciples over the meal that we have come to call ‘The Last Supper,’ one particularly moving part of the narrative is the fact that one of his followers was set to betray him. Perhaps we have experienced betrayal at some point by those who are close to us. Forgiveness is an important part of living in community since we will find that people often fail us.

My Reflections

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The life of community is usually the result of a cooperative effort. Many people can be credited for some contribution that they each have made to build the community. Rarely does the existence of community all hang on one person. However, when talking about the Christian community, it really does centre on one person.

Today is Good Friday. In many ways this day marks the darkest day in world history. The human community failed and we killed the Lord of Glory. Yet we can truly call this day, 'good.' It was not the betrayal by one member of the troupe of Jesus' followers that made this otherwise dark day good. Nor was it the denial by another that made it 'good.' Rather, it was the accomplishment of that day that made it 'good.' Jesus laid down his life as a ransom for many and the seeds of Christian community were planted.

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Psalms 22; Isaiah 52:13-53:12; John 18:1-19:42; Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

Let's Get Personal:

Is Good Friday a dark day for you or a day of celebration? If it is a day of celebration for you, give some thought as to why this is a dark day. If it is a dark day for you, give thought to what is a cause for celebration in what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

My Reflections

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Within our wider Canadian community there are many people who are new to us and our country. For those of us who are in the majority culture of our society, it might be difficult to appreciate what it is like to be part of a newcomer minority. We can fully understand why newcomers are inclined to want to spend a lot of time with others who speak the same language and have had life experiences that are similar to their own.

Jesus' early followers must have experienced an overwhelming feeling of being a minority as they huddled together away from the crowd that had taken their Lord. If we could interview on that day they would have been astonished if we could have told them that this small grieving community would be a worldwide fellowship of the risen Lord. Perhaps, on this day following the observance of Jesus' death we could give thought to the responsibilities and opportunities we have in our minority position as followers of Jesus within our broader Canadian community.

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Psalm 31:1-4,15-16; Job 14:1-14

Let's Get Personal:

Have you ever had times that you felt abandoned? Do you have people around you that might have that feeling? Do you think you have something to offer them? What difference does it make to your sense of abandonment to know what you will be celebrating tomorrow?

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How could the Way of Jesus radically change a small-town church?

It is happening right now in an EMCC church in Bowden AB.



A seasoned Christian was skeptical about the Way of Jesus, thinking it was too simple and better suited for new believers. However, after journeying a few weeks in it, he has changed his opinion and is finding it very valuable. In our men's group, it seems that every week the Spirit uses one of the seven markers of the Way of Jesus to direct individuals in the way they need to go.

As we meditate on the markers and on our new mission statement, our language is changing. The words *journey, Holy Spirit, bless, church family and Jesus* are becoming part of the new common language and it is transforming people. One woman, for example, who was struggling to be involved in evangelism has embraced the language of blessing others. "I can do that," she says. She now feels empowered to share Jesus by blessing others and inviting them to follow Him.

An important part of the Way of Jesus is participating in a community of Jesus' followers. Over the past 6 months, we have witnessed the culture of our church shift from a group of friends into a church family. More people are attending events and staying for potlucks.

We are excited to be a community of followers of Jesus on mission to the world.

Pastor Jason Metcalfe

Bowden EMC



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Community is the experience of those who have something in common.

What do followers of Jesus have in common?

The short answer is JESUS! The more we become like Jesus and depend upon the Spirit of Jesus the more we will find ourselves bound together in community. We live out His love. He has paid a great price for us. We belong to Him. We find our identity in Him! All that we have and are flows out from Him.

We also have a wonderful message of forgiveness and love to share with those around us as we share Jesus and invite others to join the community of faith.

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page.

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Exodus 14:10-31; Colossians 3:5-11

Let's Get Personal:

One of the greatest experiences of community is found in the joy of bringing others into the community. The way to join the Christian community is to accept Jesus' invitation to join. That is the invitation that he has put on our lips to share. Have you extended that invitation to anyone during the Lenten season? Well, now we are in the season of Easter so let us spread the news.

My Reflections

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One of the great barriers to community is the lack of unity. This doesn't mean that Christian community requires a troupe of clones, but it does mean that there must be a central commitment to Jesus. To be able to say, "I have begun following Jesus and am depending on the Spirit of Jesus in my journey," is a simple way of identifying what that commitment to Jesus looks like. That commitment to Jesus overflows into a commitment (love) for one another. As Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Jesus prayed for us that we would experience unity. He said, "... I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 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. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:20-23)

Read and reflect on the following passages. You can record your reflections on the next page. Exodus 15:1-18; Colossians 3:12-17

Let's Get Personal:

As we have come to the end of our revisit of The Way of Jesus training, let us not put away the way of Jesus. What are ways that you can carry this forward? Take some extra time to meditate on the passage from Colossians through the remainder of this week.

My Reflections

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