

The Right Hand

Staying on Track: Christian Community (Eph 4:1-16)

The third constituent topic within the third subsection (“Staying on Track”) of this superb LifeGuide Bible Studies booklet (*Christian Disciplines*) I am reviewing is entitled “Christian Community” (see headline above). Probably the most common definition of “church” is “community,” but that would only be half right. The proper synonym for the word “church” is “Christian community,” or “life-in-Christ-together.”

In his profound little book on “Christian community” (*Life Together*), the brilliant German Lutheran theologian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) describes the church as a “life-in-Christ-together” community. An expert on the life of the church and a key figure in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany, Bonhoeffer defied the Godlessness of the growing Nazi regime by establishing a secret seminary in a remote area of Germany during the cataclysmic days of the 1930’s. There he taught that an intentional daily devotional life was crucial to coping and living with the lunacy of those chaotic days. (Aren’t we in the same circumstances today???)

Acts 4:32-37 might well describe the quintessential Christian community for us to follow, but the Ephesians 4:1-16 passage (above) gives us “meat” on which to feed. Caring for others is essential but nourishing ourselves for good and faithful service is crucial. What are the odds that being nourished (spiritually) for two hours on a busy Sunday will equip you for Christian service on the other six days of the week? It doesn’t work for me, and I am seminary-trained!

Obviously, I am saying that true Christian community involves more than two hours on a Sunday morning. Now that Covid restrictions are being lifted, we must resume some of our shared life together. Additionally, we must equip ourselves with spiritual resources which feed our lives of service. A daily devotional life is crucial. If there is very little “fuel in your tank,” there is very little to draw on for Christian service. Start with “*Portals of Prayer*,” and go from there....

“May God keep us from complacency, and may we press on to know Him more deeply and obey Him more fully.” More next week! In Deo speramus.

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Stewardship Chair

P.S. Let us not forget that “life-together” is the proper understanding of the word “church.” I wish we could partake of some sort of Bible study. Perhaps one of these superb LifeGuide Bible Study booklets this Fall? I am willing to lead a Study, if there is any interest....