

the Journey of Discipleship

Lesson 6: Kingdom Community

INTRODUCTION:

When you became a believer in Jesus Christ, you became a part of His kingdom. As a part of His kingdom, you also became a part of His church on the Earth. The church is one expression of God's bigger kingdom. In this lesson, you will be learning about the type of community you can experience by being a part of a local church, specifically a part of All Nations Christian Fellowship (ANCF).

1. *What has been your experience so far with All Nations Christian Fellowship? Have you been encouraged by relationships with others or has it been difficult for you to connect with others?*
2. *If you were part of another church before coming to ANCF, what was your experience like there? What did you enjoy or not enjoy about your previous church experience?*

The following passage is the end of the first sermon that Peter preached right after the Holy Spirit came upon them. He is talking to Jewish people helping them understand that Jesus whom they had crucified is the Son of God. He is both their Savior and King.

READ ACTS 2:36-41

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”

⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

3. *How did the people respond to Peter's message? Why do you think they responded this way?*

4. *What did Peter tell them in response to their question, what shall we do?*

5. *Why do you think Peter included baptism in his answer? Have you heard of baptism before? If so, what does baptism mean? (If you have not heard of baptism, you can skip this question)*

We see in this passage that people were deeply convicted by Peter's message. They were so convicted that they were willing to do whatever was needed to make things right with God. Their conviction came from an understanding that their sin was the reason Jesus died on the cross. In a similar way, it is important that we see Jesus' death was something He personally did for us. The deeper we are convicted that Jesus died for us because of His great love and our great need for forgiveness, the more devoted we will be to loving and following Him. Peter's response was to repent and be baptized. Repentance as we have seen earlier is to confess your sins and change the person you are following. Once again, we are reminded that we are saved by grace, repenting of our sins and not by religious works. However, Peter also mentions that we should be baptized. Why is that?

Baptism is an outward sign of an internal reality. In baptism, we are placed under the water which symbolizes our death and burial of our old life. When we are raised out of the water, it is a symbol of new life. In the same way, Jesus was raised from the dead by resurrection power, we now are raised and living in new resurrection power. All of this happened when we believed in Jesus, but baptism allows us to have a physical demonstration to help us understand this spiritual truth. Baptism is also a picture of fully surrendering our life to Jesus as the King of our life. If you are a new believer and have not been baptized yet, this is something you should think about doing. It is one of the first steps of obeying Jesus as your new King. Feel free to ask your discipleship partner more about this.

One of the things we learn then about kingdom community is that it is made up of people who have all made Jesus their King. Although we all come from different backgrounds and cultures we have this one thing in common, we all believe in Jesus and are following Him as our King. As we continue to read the next part of this passage, we will learn more about what this new community is supposed to look like.

READ ACTS 2:42-47

⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

6. *To what four things were these new believers devoted?*

7. *How did these early believers demonstrate their devotion to fellowship (community) in this passage?*

8. *In verse 46, what two places do we see the believers spending time together at?*

The early believers were devoted not only to loving Christ but also to loving one another in the church. They built deep relationships with one another and were willing to sacrifice for one another (verse 45). It is a beautiful picture of what Jesus desires His church to look like. Before His death, Jesus gave this command, "A new commandment I give you to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." This then is one of the main goals of kingdom community: to learn to love one another with the same love that Jesus loves us. It can be challenging at times, and we will fail at times. But with the help of the Holy Spirit, we believe that He will teach us to love just as Jesus loves us.

We also see in this passage that kingdom community is about growing together. It's spending time with one another with the purpose in growing in love for Jesus and for one another. No matter how long we have been a believer, we always want to be growing in our faith and love.

GOING DEEPER

There seem to be two key places where believers spent time together. One is in the temple the other is in homes. At All Nations Christian Fellowship we have also chosen these two places to spend time together for the purpose of growing in Christ.

1. Sunday Service – this is our equivalent to meeting in the temple. It is a time we meet every week for the purpose of meeting one another, worshipping together, listening to the Word, and praying together. Although we may be scattered throughout the city during the week, we all come together as one community to learn how to love Jesus and to love one another.
2. Life Groups – this is our equivalent to meeting in homes. Life groups are small groups that usually meet in homes. Sometimes they eat together; they also spend time digging deeper into the Word and talking about how to live it out.

Close relationships are built because there is time for deeper sharing and more personal prayer for one another.

The combination of both the Sunday Service and Life groups provide an excellent way for us to build community and grow together. The bible encourages us to try not to miss times where we can be together and grow together. "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Hebrews 10:24-25

LIVING IT OUT

9. *What opportunities for growth do you see in attending Sunday Service? Have you been experiencing growth in this service? If so, in what ways?*

10. *What benefits do you see in attending a life group on a weekly basis? If you have already started attending one, how has this group helped you grow? (If you are in a small group with IFI or InterVarsity answer the question based on that group.)*

MOVING FORWARD

11. *If you are not attending the Sunday Service or a Life group regularly, pray about making this change in your schedule. If you need help in choosing a life group to attend, ask your discipleship partner for help.*

12. *Attend the Sunday Service or a Life group this week. When you go look for someone that you could encourage. Also, look for any needs that you see people might have. Write down what your experience was like.*