

Reject all other ways of living. Don't rob yourself of the joy of living that Jesus wants to share with us. After all it's Jesus' life that we share.

Step two, act on this belief and join a fellowship group, or set about starting one. Get two or three other people and commit to share Jesus' life together. Commit to be there for each other. Commit to wash each other's feet.

Don't commit to an event, commit to a small community of people. Commit to share life together, built on Jesus, the Jesus who has revealed his heart and soul in the bible. Listen to Jesus together, daily pray for each other, regularly eat with each other, be

there for each other. Join a fellowship group that is a living breathing expression of Jesus sharing his life with us.

Today invite the Holy Spirit to lead you into a fellowship group, a group that shares Jesus' life together, in down-to-earth ways. Invite the Holy Spirit to touch you and overcome those fears and anxieties that keep people at arm's length. We know that's not the sort of life Jesus has invited us to share with him.

Let us pray. Jesus, thank you for coming to share your life with me, with us. Thank you for not keeping me at arm's length, but that you risked your life, that you risked being crucified that

I might share your life with you.

Jesus I invite you to send the Holy Spirit to show where in my life I need healing in my relationships. Please heal me so that I can be living life with you, growing your community, loving as I am loved by you, in down-to-earth practical ways, not counting the cost.

Jesus lead me to those you want me to be in a fellowship group with. Give me the courage, love and wisdom to be part of a group that I might be living in community as you have given your life for me to enjoy. Jesus thank you that I don't have to face life alone, but I can live with you and be part of your loving community.

3 February 2008

## Jesus Calls Us to Live Life Together - 1 Jesus' Dream



"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to FELLOWSHIP, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

After God created Adam and set him up in the Garden of Eden, what did God say? "It's not good!" "It's not good for the man to be alone." It's not good to be alone. We were never created to be islands, isolated from other people. What was God's solution? "I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18)

God's answer is community. Another person to share life with.

In the Old Testament reading we see Moses going up Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. Why do you think God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments? They already had the promise that they were God's chosen people, so why did

they need the Ten Commandments? Actually Moses got more than the Ten Commandments, he got a blue print on how to build a community which reflects the LORD. Some of the headings in my bible are; Personal Injures, Protection of Property, Social Responsibility, Laws of Justice and Mercy.

Exodus 23:2 "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, and do not show favouritism to the poor in a lawsuit." In Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy we get God's blue print for his community. A community which is to reflect him, which is to live with him in a faithful relationship or love and trust.

When Adam and Eve sin, what gets broken? Just

prior to the fall we read; "The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame." (Genesis 2:25) This isn't some fashion statement, but a reflection of their relationship. Open, honest, nothing to fear. But once they sin it's a different story; "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves." (Genesis 3:7) Their wonderful open relationship is wrecked. Community is shattered.

When the Israelites become unfaithful to the LORD what happens to their community. When economic gain is their motivating force, they sell out the LORD for other gods who are going to make them rich and powerful. What happens to justice in the land? What happens to the community that the LORD had envisioned? It

### Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

is shattered. That community which was to reflect the LORD is totally wrecked.

Why was Jesus born? Why did he die on the cross? Why was he raised on the third day? Because it's not good for us to be alone. It's not good for us to be separated from God and his love for us. It's not good for us to be alone, separated from each other, hiding from each other behind our fig leaves, believing they give us the right image.

In case you haven't noticed the bible is all about relationships. The bible is all about sharing life together. God comes in Jesus so that we might share his life, together with him. The bible is all about sharing God's life with him and with each other.

Living in splendid isolation from each other certainly isn't Jesus' dream. Keeping people at arm's length so we don't get hurt, isn't Jesus' dream. Living on a superficial level where there isn't any risk of hurt

feelings, or getting ripped off, isn't Jesus' dream.

When Peter saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain, what did he want to do? Build three shelters. What would that have done to Jesus? I reckon it would have put Jesus up on a pedestal, and made him untouchable. It would have turned the place into

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### At the heart of the bible is a relationship

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some super holy shrine, and Jesus the person would have been lost.

Instead at the end of this revealing time we read; "When the disciples heard this (the voice of God) they fell face down to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. 'Get up', he said. 'Don't be afraid.' When they looked up they saw no one except Jesus." (Matthew 17:6-8) Jesus wasn't at arm's length, but touching them. They didn't look up and see a new set of rules and

regulations. They didn't see the right image that would win them other people's respect. They saw no one except Jesus; the one who touched them, chasing away their fear.

At the heart of the bible is a relationship. Not a relationship of fear. Not a relationship that keeps us at arm's length. But in

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Jesus we have a relationship which touches our heart and soul, a relationship which is totally open. Jesus reveals his heart and soul so that we

can get up close and personal. He doesn't keep us at a safe distance. Jesus is born, my brother. Jesus dies, in my place. Jesus invites me to his table to share life together with him. Jesus will return so that we might go with him and live in our Father's home. At the heart of the bible is community.

The community which Jesus creates with his touch, we call – church. The life we share together with Jesus we call – church.

Church is not an event we do. Church is not a club we are members of.

Church is the life we share together with Jesus. Church is that community of people who are living together united in their relationship with Jesus. Church is that community of people who share life together under Jesus' rule, finding their identity in Jesus.

On the night Jesus was betrayed what do we find him doing? We find him doing what he wants to find us doing. "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13:14) Jesus has just modelled the form of relationship he wants us to be daily living.

Then we have that well known text; "A new command I give you: Love one another." That's relational. That's community. "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone

will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34,35)

This is not safe detached living, but getting involved, getting our hands dirty, as we get involved in the nitty gritty of living. That's what washing each other's feet is all about. It's not safe, it's dirty, it's smelly, and at times we'd rather not

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### Jesus' dream; a community in the very shape of Jesus

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do it. But when it comes to sharing life together, that's how it's done; down-to-earth. You don't love at arm's length, but by following Jesus' example and getting involved in people's lives, even to the point of being crucified for knowing them.

Jesus' dream is of a community that washes one another's feet – that gets down and dirty in the everyday acts of life. Jesus' dream is of a community of disciples – people following, seeking to be just like him, loving

each other with their lives, loving each other to death.

Over the next weeks we'll be looking at the how. How we can be this community that Jesus has given his life for.

The first step is in recognizing that this is our goal. This is Jesus' dream.

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If I'm looking in a different direction, I won't reach the goal Jesus is so passionate about. Jesus goal is that we be the community he is

shaping us to be. That's why he calls us 'The Body of Christ'. That's a community image. A community in the very shape of Jesus himself. A heart, and a liver independent of each other don't make a body. An arm and a leg which won't work together don't make a body. A brain severed from the neck doesn't make a body. What a profound image of community Jesus uses to describe his church.

Step one, recognize that Jesus' goal is that we live with him in community.