

The Rec-Connection

Physical exercise has some value, but spiritual exercise is much more important, for it promises a reward in both this life and the next. 1 Timothy 4:8

In Search of Community **September 2006**

Acts 4:32-35

"All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time-to-time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need."

This passage from Acts gives us an eye opening look at the early church. From it I take 2 key ideas that I would like to explore with you. 1. It is so startlingly different from our lives and 2. This passage shows us that sharing the message of Christ was more important to them than anything else.

The first group of believers took the parable of the lilies seriously (Matt. 6:28) and did not worry about food, clothes or possessions, only the message or Christ. A starkly different view considering our capitalistic society, some people might even call this the first version of communism! But in thinking about these 2 points, I ask myself, "What purpose does the church have today? If this is how Christ left the church, and we are so different, what purpose do we serve?" Before I answer that question, let's dig down a little deeper and take the story more collectively, in context.

The early church was set up as small communities, partly because of convenience but also for safety. During this time it wasn't a good idea to be an open follower of "the way" as it was against the established norm, and in most cases illegal. Second, before the invention of the printing press all texts were handwritten. Very rarely would any one person have their own copy, and all copies of the Holy Scriptures would be very valuable. Studying of the Bible was a group effort. They would meet together, listen to the daily readings, and then discuss. As I have already stated, the political climate of the time did not lend itself to the message of Christ. If after a scripture reading you were to bring up a teaching of Jesus, you might be stoned or tried with treason. So staying together and learning from each other was not only convenient but safe!

Why is this important? In the verses just before our chosen scripture, Peter and John had been threatened by the government and ordered to stop teaching about Jesus, but Peter is "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:8) and makes the case to be let go. They return to the group and offer up a prayer of thanksgiving for what just happened. "When they finish praying the ground shook and they all preached the word of God boldly." (Acts 4:31) So what does this mean? Living together in community sharpened their faith, made them bold, and pleased God so much that the ground before them shook.

We may not be selling our possessions as the early church did, but in community we learn from each other, encourage each other, and hold each other accountable. Studying the scriptures together is powerful, learning from each other is powerful, and sharing the news together is powerful. What is the purpose of the modern church? In my opinion, it is to build community. It is to connect one another, foster an environment that is pleasing to God, and ultimately shake the ground we walk on.

Chris Jones
Director of Recreational Ministries

Featured Program

5K Food Fight "Fighting Hunger in Plano"

*Sponsored by the Roadrunners and
Women in Mission*

The 5K Food Fight will kick-off the 2006 Block Party and Craft Fair here at Christ Church. The run will benefit Women in Mission's Stuff the Bus campaign which collects food for local food pantries. For more information or to register online, visit www.cumcsports.com



News & Events

Upward Coach and Referee Recruitment begins

September 24th!

Reserve your team early
as space is limited!
visit www.cumcsports.com
and download an
application.



Pick-up Basketball Games

Thursday nights at 7:00 PM

Pick-up Volleyball Games

Tuesday nights at 7:00 PM

Bring a Friend and Save!

For the fall fitness session you can save up to 20% on your registration fee! Current or previous class participants who bring a NEW class participant receive 15% off, while the new participant receives 20% off! See the website for further details.

Christ United Methodist Church
3101 Coit Road Plano, Texas 75075
www.cumcsports.com

Christian Life Center
972-596-6073
Recreation@cumc.com