



Common Table - Part 1 - "All Things in Common"

Ephesians 1:22-23 (MSG)

Jesus is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.

Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Ephesians 4:1-7 (NIV)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Key Points

- The table reflects both our belonging and our invitation to belong. At the table, we experience the reality of what we have in common and are treated like family.
- The Church should stand as a unique haven of belonging – a community where our shared identity propels us toward shared responsibilities.
- Our shared identity also comes with a profound responsibility to care for, uplift, and support one another.
- We must cultivate a shared purpose by transcending our differences and nurturing a community where love, understanding, and grace flourish.
- Our actions – or inaction – have consequences within our community and beyond. One cannot participate in community without shaping it.

- The call to follow Christ is not solitary. It's an invitation to embark on a journey of faith alongside others.
- We bear the integrity of His image and the influence of His love.
- The church is how God has designed His love to be experienced and expressed.
- Our shared identity becomes the foundation for how we relate to one another.
- Community is the relational space through which God's love is exchanged, experienced, and expressed.
- Community isn't found, it's built. Belonging comes with responsibility.

READ

Open your time together by reading the scripture passages on Page 1. Then, take a moment to consider what you just read:

- **Read Ephesians 1:22-23. What are the implications for our community when we recognize that God's love gets expressed and experienced through the Church?**
- **Read Acts 2:42-47. How do we see the imagery of a common table represented in the relationships that flourished in the early Church?**
- **Read Ephesians 4:1-7,11-16. How does this passage speak to "belonging comes with responsibility"? What is the responsibility we care about?**

REFLECT

"For Jesus' disciples, biological parenting isn't meant to be the only way we leave a legacy and build a family. It's not even meant to be the primary way we leave a legacy or build a family. Jesus treats the family of God as something much more substantial than just a pretty metaphor. It is a concrete claim, literal state of being. Those who follow God together are family to one another." -Greg Coles

- **Read the quote from Greg Coles. How do we underestimate the legacy mindset God has for the Church?**
- **Why do you believe God utilized the imagery of a common table to highlight His view of community?**

RESPOND

"In a culture where so many long for authentic connection, the Church has the incredible opportunity to be a beacon of hope and belonging. This deliberate thoughtfulness transforms our faith communities into sanctuaries of encouragement and renewal." -Tony Ripa

- **Read the quote from Tony Ripa. How can you actively ensure that your church community remains a place where all are genuinely welcomed and included, mirroring the open seat at God's table?**
- **One cannot participate in a community without shaping it. How would you describe the ways you are shaping your community?**
- **In what practical ways can you demonstrate God's love tangibly to the world around you, becoming a vessel through which His love is unveiled?**

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests either collectively or by breaking up into prayer partners.