



Common Table - Part 2 - "A Place to Belong"

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV)

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.

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 2:41-47 (NIV)

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. 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 4:20-24 (NIV)

That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Key Points

- The world needs the Church because that's how Christ designed it. Therefore, we must strive to become the kind of church Christ envisions.
- We reside in a world that has been greatly worn down, causing us to view trustworthiness as a high standard when, in fact, it should be a fundamental aspect of our humanity.
- We bear a responsibility for nurturing a sense of belonging as we support one another in love.
- The church's purpose is to bear witness to the reality of God and His Kingdom.
- Our goal is to create a safe space where individuals can hear the Gospel and contemplate its implications.
- A disciple is a friend and follower of Jesus, empowered by Him to love.
- Being a follower of Jesus means organizing your life as a learner.
- You have never learned anything without someone else.

READ

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

- **Read Acts 1:8.** What are the implications that the Church bears witness to God?
- **Read Acts 2:41-47.** In this passage, we see a description of the early Christian community's life and practices. What lessons can we draw from these verses about the characteristics of a vibrant and united Christian community? How can we apply these principles to our own churches or communities today?
- **Read Ephesians 4:15-16, 20-24.** The apostle Paul talks about putting off the old self and putting on the new self in Christ. How do you understand this transformation process in your own life? What role does community play in this process?

REFLECT

- Why do you think the statement "The world needs the Church because that's how Christ designed it" is significant in understanding the role of the Church in today's world?
- How has the modern world's challenges impacted our perception of trustworthiness, and why is it essential for the Church to restore trustworthiness as a fundamental aspect of our humanity?
- What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus, and how does being empowered by Him to love impact our daily lives and interactions with others?

RESPOND

- Reflecting on the statement "You have never learned anything without someone else," how has the guidance and influence of others played a role in your spiritual journey?
- How can you actively contribute to nurturing a sense of belonging within our church community as we support one another in love?
- What are some practical ways you can organize your life as learners and continuously grow in your faith?

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.