



Koinonia [K1]

The Beauty & Necessity of Small Christian Communities

For an elaboration,
see <https://www.a-z.ctn.sg/post/koinonia-k1>

Opening Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, live in us
With God the Father and the Son,
And grant us your abundant grace
To sanctify and make us one.

May mind and tongue made strong in love
Your praise throughout the world proclaim,
And may that love within our hearts
Set fire to others with its flame.

Most blessed Trinity of love,
For whom the heart of man was made,
To you be praise in timeless song,
And everlasting homage paid.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

1. Everyone Needs Someone

“One way of renewing parishes, especially urgent for parishes in large cities, might be to consider the parish as a community of communities and movements... **to form ecclesial communities and groups of a size that allows for true human relationships.**”

Pope St. John Paul II, in [The Church in America](#), 22
January 1999, at [41]

Ecclesial communities and groups

Of a size that allows for

True human relationships

What *size* would this be?

A typical Sunday

Everyone needs someone

“The deepest ache of the soul is the spiritual longing for **connection** and **belonging**. No one was created for isolation... nothing vitalizes the human spirit like the experience of a loving connection – **something that assures us that we are not alone** and that **we count for something to someone.**”

- David Benner

2. Authentic Discipleship, Authentic Community

St. Paul's prayer for the Philippians in **Phil 1:5**

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your **partnership** in the gospel from the first day until now.”

“Partnership” = Greek word “Koinonia”

- Fellowship
- Participation
- Community
- A sharing in
- Communion

Consider

Are you currently experiencing “koinonia” in your own journey of Christian discipleship?

“We know that the first year after one finishes RCIA or goes through a major conversion is critical and can be surprisingly difficult as the new disciple faces many unexpected obstacles and decisions. We also know that many converts ultimately “drown” in the vast, lonely Catholic ocean. **If we are serious about making disciples, we must intentionally support them once they are made.** Most new disciples need an “Ananias,” a disciple-companion, or **an Ananias-like group of spiritual companions who understand what he or she is experiencing and will walk alongside...** As we make disciples in our congregations, some kinds of community will form naturally, but we will need to support spontaneous networks of friends with **intentional discipleship-centered community building**”.

- Sherry Weddell

“The Second Vatican Council indicates the **necessity for pastors ‘to form genuine Christian communities’ [6],”**

and

that such Christian community life is “not realized spontaneously”, but that it “is **necessary to educate it carefully [7].”**

3. Saints in Community - St. Benedict, Charlemagne & St. Dominic





4. Four Key Characteristics of Authentic Christian Community

Acts 2:24-27 (Compelling Vision of an Authentic and Thriving Christian Community)

“42 And they held steadfastly to the **apostles’ teaching** and **fellowship**, to the **breaking of the bread** and to the **prayers**. 43 And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

4 Key Characteristics for Christian Community to Thrive

Characteristic	Elaboration
Shared Prayer	From the Breaking of Bread and Prayers
Shared Learning	From the Apostles' Teaching
Shared Fellowship	From Fellowship
Shared Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inherent to what the disciples and Apostles were doing. They were caught up with the Great Commission, with mission. • Authentic community cannot exist without mission

5. A Call to Action – Join, Start, Restart

“A person who has given adherence to Jesus Christ by faith and is endeavoring to consolidate that faith by catechesis **needs to live in communion with those who have taken the same step. Catechesis runs the risk of becoming barren if no community of faith and Christian life takes the catechumen in at a certain stage of his catechesis.** That is why the ecclesial community at all levels has a twofold responsibility with regard to catechesis: it has the responsibility of providing for the training of its members, but **it also has the responsibility of welcoming them into an environment where they can live as fully as possible what they have learned.**”

- Pope St. John Paul II, on the critical link between

catechesis and community

Conclusion

- A life of **authentic discipleship** is inseparable from being in **small authentic Christian community** (with 4 characteristics of Shared Prayer, Learning, Fellowship & Mission).
- **True human relationships** in the context of such a community becomes the fertile soil for an abundant, good and fruitful Christian life.

Consider

- Are *you* currently experiencing “koinonia” in your own journey of Christian discipleship?
- How will you take a tangible step today to *join, start or restart* a small authentic Christian community?

Closing Prayer – Come Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy his consolations.

Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.