

COMMUNITY AND THE TRINITY

JOHN 17:20-26

Being in community...

- One of our deepest human needs
- At the same time difficult!



20 'My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.'

Christian community and unity are the
prayer of Jesus

... so how can we grow in this?

Keys to community in John 17

1. Us in God
2. Glory on us
3. God in us
4. Love through us

1. Us in God

‘...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.’ (verse 21)

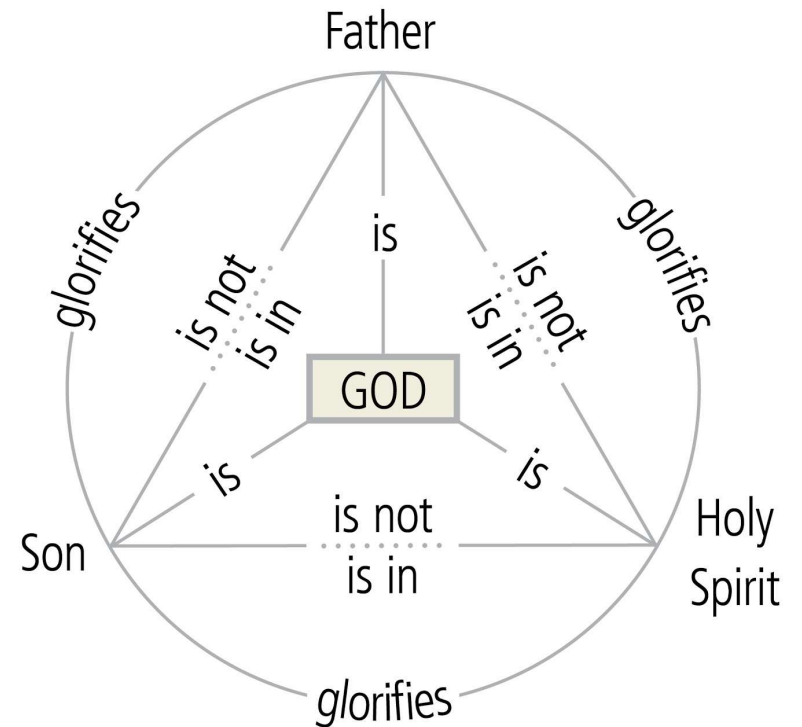
How can we be one?

‘...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you (verse 21)’

Unity that reflects the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit in unity

‘Perichoresis’ – indwelling of Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Our community here on earth flows from together being ‘in’ God



180 times 'in Christ' or 'in Him' in the NT – most common expression for a follower of Jesus

Galatians 3:28

'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

“...the most intimate and inscrutable of all secrets”

Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it be a brief, single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

Do we see the other believer as a person also in Christ?

This also has an outward flow and impact:

‘May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.’ (verse 21)

It is only by being in God that we can be an effective testimony to the wider world – not just a moral message etc.

Do we recognise and value being in Christ?

Do we spend time with God in prayer?

Do we spend time in the Scriptures?

– more than friendship – Christian community only exists in Christ

2. Glory on us

'I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one' (verse 22)



Sun-lit Waning Crescent Moon & Earth-lit (reflected Sunlight) Waxing Gibbous Earthshine
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Be The Moon.



Reflect The Sun.

What is this glory?

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'glory'?

How does glory make us one and form community?

Threefold glory in John 17?

John 17:1 'Father, the hour has come [**the cross**]. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

John 17:4 I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do [**His ministry**].

John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. [**resurrection and ascension**].

So what does it mean to be given the glory of Jesus?

In this life: sharing in His cross, His ministry and His resurrection

Philippians 3:10-11 'I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.'

The church community can become one when we share in the cross, work and resurrection of Jesus:

- Sacrifice
- Humility
- Grace
- Mercy
- Perseverance
- Life
- Joy
- Power

A radical change of values

Think about a time when being in community has been a struggle.

What does the cross, ministry and resurrection of Jesus say to these things?

3. God in us

'I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity.' (verse 23)

‘Complete unity’ = ‘perfected in unity’

- a sense of bringing something to its intended goal or state of completion

How is this achieved? By the indwelling of the Father in the Son and Son in us.



How does the Son dwell in us?

By the Holy Spirit:

Ephesians 3:16-17

'I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.'

Father

Son

Holy
Spirit

You
and
me



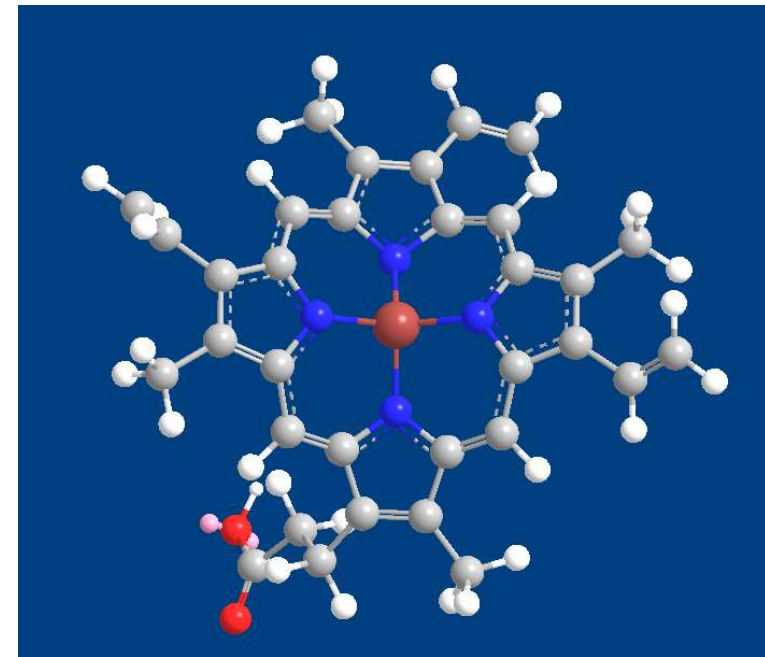
The church community is not just a club, association, activity or institution.

The more a church is caught up and filled by the life of God the stronger its community and witness will be.

God in us...

1. Changes how we relate to each other
2. Enables us to learn from each other

- the life of God in us is best expressed and experienced in community:



4. Love through us

‘I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.’ (verse 26).

'...will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them'

- (1) Through the revelation of Father God
- (2) Comes the love of the Father for the Son
- (3) And that love can be received by us

That we may love the Son and each other with the love of God

This is not in its supreme expression something we drum up but love that flows from the love of the Father for the Son

What does this love mean?

Difference between tolerance and love: the Father does not just tolerate the Son

Must be drained of ill-will towards others and yearn for their flourishing

Note this is not insular...not something just for us

Two times repeated:

‘...that the world may believe that you have sent me.’ (verse 21)

‘Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.’ (verse 23)

Keys to community in John 17

1. Us in God
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In which area do we most need to grow in our understanding and experience?

Christian community is the prayer of Jesus and something we were made for.

How can we be a God honouring church community in two senses: in our aims and in our relationships?