



奧克蘭華人長老會 AUCKLAND CHINESE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sermon Summary - 7 March 2021

Better Together - Acts 2:41-47, 4:32-35 (Andrew Cox)

(Missing words at the end)

A Harvard University study followed several hundred people in Boston from 1938 found that the most important prologue to a good life was warm, intimate (1) _____. The early church was marked by “(2) _____” or in the Greek, “Koinonia”. It’s the word, translated “fellowship” in Acts 2:42

Contagious Unity

“All the believers were one in heart and mind.” 4:32. See also Ephesians 4:3-6. Our unity is based on the unity of the (3) _____. We are to make every effort, but it is ultimately only something (4) _____ can do in our hearts.

A big part of this unified community is food and hospitality. E.g. Patrick of Ireland

Karen Mains says that hospitality is not about our performance as housekeepers or cooks or interior decorators, but it is about an open-hearted friendship that makes people feel (5) _____ and (6) _____.

In his book, *The Sibling Society*, Robert Bly argues that the loss of family time in the past few decades has had a devastating effect on people’s mental health and success in life.

Nigel Dixon in his book, “*Village without Walls*”, writes, “*I have a dream of church being (7) _____. Of everyone being accepted, loved and valued ...*”

Peculiar Generosity

“...: they sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. “ 2:45. There were no (8) _____ persons among them. This kind of selfless behaviour is often overlooked in church growth books but is now firmly established as one of the key contributing factors of the astonishing (9) _____ of the church.

Example of generous giving: The construction and furnishings of the (10) _____ that God's people carried with them in the desert. After a certain point, Moses told the people to stop giving because they had already given more than was needed.

The recent World Happiness Report found that “[Generosity] is clearly a marker for a sense of positive community engagement, and a central way that humans connect with each other.”

So what does this mean for us?

Get involved in church! Find a place to serve, welcome visitors, invite them to your place, seek to grow in your walk with Jesus with others in a small group or some other format, help others grow as well, make

friends, worship God with passion. And remember that the church exists primarily for those who (11)____
_____ our services including those who are different from us ethnically, culturally economically
or whatever.

When the church is functioning well - when it exhibits contagious unity and peculiar generosity - it will be a
place we want to come to and bring others and put up our hand to ask, "What can I do?" In his book,
Redemptive Family, Howard Webb describes the church as a(12) _____ on (13)_____.

I'm expanding our theme for the year to reflect what Acts 2 & 4 are talking about here: (14)_____ **in,**
(15)_____ up, (16)_____ out. Welcoming in people through hospitality and community, growing
up in Christ and moving out to the needy and the self-sufficient with the Good News and yes, eventually to
25 Union St! On 21/3/21, you will have a chance to give input on these areas. Do join us then!

Questions

1. Read Acts 2:41-47. What are the features of the early church that you see? Was this redistribution of wealth normative (universally applicable) for later generations?
2. What do you think unity looks like? What doesn't it look like? How can we foster unity in our church and family?
3. How could we apply the the example of St Patrick communities of hospitality and a "rule of life" to follow?
4. Read Acts 4:32-35. What strikes you about this passage? Describe a time when you gave generously and the positive impact it had on you (and others). How could we foster this generous spirit in our church?
5. What ways do you serve in church? How can we better harness the gifts of our members?
6. Come along to the "round table" discussions on 21 March.
7. Pray for our church to be a place where people are welcomed in, growing up and moving out!

Missing words

(1) Relationships (2) togetherness (3) Godhead (4) the Spirit (5) welcome (6) wanted (7) *family* (8) needy
(9) growth (10) Tabernacle (11) do not attend (12) family (13) mission (14) Welcoming (15) growing (16)
moving