

“Committed to Deeper Community”  
The Marks of Jesus’ Disciples, Part 3  
Small Group Study  
Week of Oct. 4, 2009

Often the first thing that come to mind when we hear the word “fellowship” is the cup of coffee and chit-chat that we have after worship services on Sunday mornings. Mark’s sermon this week reminded us that authentic Christian fellowship, while including these, is much deeper than these.

***To Begin ...***

1. Statistics tell us that there is a growing crisis of loneliness among people today. Do your observations confirm these statistics? If so, where do you see it and what are the causes? If not, why not?
2. What are some of the different impressions (both positive and negative) people can have when they hear the word “sharing”? What is your perspective on it?

***Review the sermon ...***

1. The sermon stated: “Fellowship refers to our love for God’s family” and referenced 1 John 4:21, which emphasizes the importance of not only loving people, but especially of loving those in the church, which is seen clearly in the NRSV translation: “*The commandment we have from his is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.*”  
  
Why does John say that it is not only love for others that is important, but especially love for our “*brothers and sisters*” in Christ?
2. Here are the four “levels” of fellowship mentioned in the sermon along with the Scripture passage referenced. For each discuss what Mark meant and what it means for our life together as God’s people.

**Exploration – seeking the truth**

*For the LORD your God .... defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien.... And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.*  
(Dt. 10:17-19)

**Membership – choosing to belong**

*... you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household* (Eph. 2:19)

**Community – sharing life together**

*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.* (Acts 2:46-47)

**Sacrifice – giving of ourselves**

*Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”*  
(1 John 3:16)

### ***Going Deeper ...***

Read Acts 2:42-47 (God's establishing of the church), out loud together. Below the passage has been split up. Go through each part individually and ask:

1. What does each part imply about what Christian fellowship should involve?
2. How do you think it should be manifest in our fellowship at MHPC?

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching...*

*... and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

*Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.*

*All the believers were together and had everything in common.*

*Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he 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.*

### ***Making it Personal and Practical ...***

1. How would you describe our fellowship here at MHPC? What are our strengths? What areas could we grow in?
2. What can you do (as an individual and a group) to help promote the kind of community God wants in our church?

### ***Praying Together ...***

1. Share concerns with one another, and pray for those concerns.
2. Pray for MHPC, and pray for God's help promoting community at MHPC.