

Trinity Lutheran Church 10-2-16
 Norman, OK. www.tlcnorman.org
 “One Family –
 Church, School, Campus Ministry”



Emphasis	Greek	Hebrew	Latin
 WITNESS	μαρτυρία (<i>martyria</i>)	תְּעוּדָה	testimonium
 MERCY	διακονία (<i>diakonia</i>)	רְחֻמִים	ministerium
 LIFE TOGETHER	κοινωνία (<i>koinōnia</i>)	חַיִּים יחד	communio, societas

Lesson 3 - LIFE TOGETHER

Koinōnia, fellowship, and life together are perhaps both the easiest and the hardest to describe in the Church. Certainly the Church has fellowship and a life together in Jesus. As we have been made part of His Body through Baptism, Jesus shares His divine life with us. This defines how we live together as His people. Gathered together in His name, we hear Him speak and preach His Word to us. Assembled around His Supper, we receive the body and blood He shares with us. In this intimate communion with our Lord, there is life—the Lord’s own life, which He shares with us. From this fellowship and life together with Jesus, the Church expands outward into the world carrying Jesus’ own life—the life-bestowing Gospel in Word and Sacrament.

How the Church accomplishes this task may vary from time to time and from place to place. Collectively, the Church makes plans for carrying out Christ’s witness and showing mercy to others. We see this in Paul’s description of a collection for the poor (1 Corinthians 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8–9). Through repentant faith, each of us as individuals is joined to Christ, our Head. However, collectively we are also joined to Him and to one another. We are all part of His Body, the Church. Life together in Jesus gives us Church fellowship: fellowship in doctrine, in worship, in the Lord’s Supper. This expands to include congregational fellowship and even fellowship dinners and fellowship groups. Sadly, schisms and divisions arise in the Church, but we have our Lord’s promise that our life together will continue rooted in His Word and in His forgiving gifts.

Fellowship in Christ Jesus

Read 1 Corinthians 1:9 and 1 John 1:3. In the Greek language, when *koinōnia* is paired with a genitive case (“fellowship of _____”), what is shared receives the emphasis.

31. In the passages above, with whom does a Christian have fellowship?

32. Those who are baptized and believe share Jesus. Whatever happens is not just between them, but also between them and Him. How does that impact our life together, especially in terms of sorrow, conflict, joy, peace, and so on?

Fellowship with the Body and Blood of Christ

Read 1 Corinthians 10:15–17. Paul calls the eating and drinking of Christ’s body and blood in the Lord’s Supper a *koinōnia*, or a participation, in His Body. Paul gives both a positive and a negative example of participation. The Lord’s Supper is not simply an event occurring between the individual believer and his or her Lord. Rather, when we eat and drink, we commune with others.

33. Participation in the body and the blood of the Lord incorporates us into the Body of Jesus. How we receive Jesus’ body and blood hidden under the bread and wine and how Jesus brings us the forgiveness of sins through the Lord’s Supper is a mystery. However, Jesus’ words both promise and deliver this mystery to us. The Lord sustains our life together and enables us to show mercy to people in the world. There are significant implications for participating in the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. How does participation in Christ’s Body exclude us from participation with others?

Hermann Sasse wrote, “The Biblical word for this fellowship is *koinonia*, *communio*. This *koinonia* is distinct from all other fellowships because it is not of human origin and reaches beyond the range of what is earthly and human” (*We Confess the Sacraments*, p. 140).

34. Paul writes, “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body” (1 Corinthians 10:17). How are we made into one body?

Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

Koinōnia, fellowship, or life together is trinitarian. In Baptism, the Holy Spirit brings us into fellowship with Jesus, who becomes our brother. Jesus brings us into fellowship with His Father. Through Baptism, we enjoy fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, into whose triune name we are baptized. Through Baptism, we also enjoy fellowship with our brothers and sisters in the Christian faith. Through the Church’s Gospel ministry of Word and Sacraments, the Holy Spirit “calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith” (explanation of the Third Article, Luther’s Small Catechism).

Read 2 Corinthians 13:11–14.

39. How does the Holy Spirit promote fellowship?

The Body of Christ

Martin Luther writes,

It is inevitable that various faults and mistakes will occur in the community of believers, so we should not get angry if we bite our own tongue, punch ourselves in the eye, kick ourselves or bang our head against a wall. This is when we should think in this way: “So, this is a member of your body, your brother, your neighbour: what are you going to do about it? He did it by accident and not for fun—it was not meant maliciously. Or else it happened out of weakness or ignorance. The blow has landed, and it hurts, but does this mean that you are going to throw away an entire limb?” (*Luther’s Breviary: A Meditation for Each Day of the Year*, p. 128)

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–26.

36. The Church is the Body of Christ. How might that impact how individuals treat each another, especially during times of conflict?

Luther continues,

This is obvious: if anyone’s foot hurts him, yes, even the little toe, the eye at once looks at it, the fingers grasp it, the face puckers, the whole body bends over to it, and all are concerned with this small member; again, once it is cared for all the other members are benefited. (*The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods*, AE 35:52)

37. Why is it important that Christians have sympathy with one another during times of suffering?

Pray: Almighty God, You show those in error the light of Your truth so that they may return to the way of righteousness. Grant faithfulness to all who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ’s Church that they may avoid whatever is contrary to their confession and follow all such things as are pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen (*LSB Altar Book*, p. 895).

