



## Session One: Christian Community as Witness

“In your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ...” *1 Peter 3:15*

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### GOAL

*The central practice at the heart of Christian community is the Lord's Supper – telling the Jesus story and eating together.*

### Telling Our Stories

- What does a “*family meal*” look like in your household, or family of origin? How often? How long?
- Do you eat quietly, eat with talking, eat with TV?
- Can you identify a time in your own experience when a meal or dinner party had a profound impact on your life?

### Read

Luke 24:13-35; the story of two inquirers on the road to Emmaus

- Can you identify an Emmaus experience in your own life?
- Where you were surprised by a spiritual insight or an encounter with someone who just made sense?

### Activity: Share a meal together

#### *Introduce The Empty Chair*

Have we missed someone? Someone in your life that you would like to see at this Table?

#### *The Medium is the Message*

The Eucharist; [the Great Thanksgiving] - (RESOURCE #1)

### Explore

What are we doing here, with this meal, conversation and the communion ritual?

Why has this simple ritual been the central reality in Christian community for 2000 years?

Why is it framed as a meal? How do *you* explain this concrete, material action that has a subjective, heart-reality, to a watching world?

John 13:34, 35 “*A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*”

Jesus suggests that the way his followers conduct their lives together is the first tell-tale sign that the watching world will observe about “*those Christians.*”

**Liturgy after the liturgy:** What is our “*work*” after we have participated in The Lord’s Supper; after we have experienced joy, gratitude, love and comraderie?

**Video clip:** Sarah Miles, “*Bread and Wine*”

### **Christ Has No Body**

Christ has no body but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
with compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.  
Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

### **Connecting Word and Deed**

We want to develop habits and practices that help us to connect our desire to live as godly, loving Christians (deeds) alongside our desire to communicate to others the “*good news*” that we have found in Jesus (words). These practices are spiritual discernment exercises. We need to learn how to pay attention to what God the Holy Spirit is already doing in the lives of the people within our spheres of influence. Our task is not to “*evangelize*” our friends; our task is to bear faithful witness as we participate with what God is already doing in their lives.



### **The Practice: Notice**

In our world of individualism, we have a very serious attention deficit disorder. We are so busy doing our own thing we rarely take the time to notice each other. We don’t pay attention. The Kingdom practice here is to make enough time and space in our lives so that we can actually notice – pay attention – to other people.

***Be generous with your attention.*** Give it away freely. Keep watch. Make sure that the people we come into contact with are ‘ok.’ This practice also helps us become familiar with the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Becoming sensitive to His guidance is vital!

***Assignment:*** Who are the people in your life who probably need your generous attention? Will you take time for one person this week? Can you give them your generous attention? Observe them, pray for them, talk to them, listen to them, love them. Nothing overt is required. Be understated.

### **Prayer**

**God of the Universe, you noticed us, you sent us yourself in Jesus, you gave us your generous attention. Thank you for the beautiful feet of those who shared good news with us. Jesus, we revere you as Lord and Master of our hearts, help us to pay attention to others, as you did to us. Holy Spirit, lead us to those in our lives who need us to pay attention to them, in Jesus’ name. Amen.**