

Heartbeat



Hope In Christ Church
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True Community Requires Fellowship

By Pastor Scott Roberts

Imagine a group of people where no one ever talked to each other, or hung out together, or was aware of the happenings in each other's lives. Now imagine the same group but instead of never talking, these folks never stopped talking; instead of never hanging out, these people are always together; and instead of being unaware, they are intimately aware of one another including the good, the bad, and the indifferent things that are happening in each other's lives. Which group of people has fellowship and



therefore, community?

To be a community, individuals need to have a place where they belong, are known, and know others. We call this knowing and being known **fellowship**. Fellowship is not just cookies-and-coffee on a Sunday morning, along with some perfunctory statements about the weather. Fellowship is a

way of living. Community doesn't require fellowship as a noun, but fellowshiping as a verb. The verb, the activity of forming life together, is what builds true community. Fellowshiping takes more than just a Sunday morning; it involves time together during the week. True community is built over the long haul as people give of themselves and create space to work together, to play together, to serve together, to pray together, to eat together, to cry together, to laugh together, and to worship together. All these components (and probably a few others that aren't listed) are part of

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True Community Requires Fellowship

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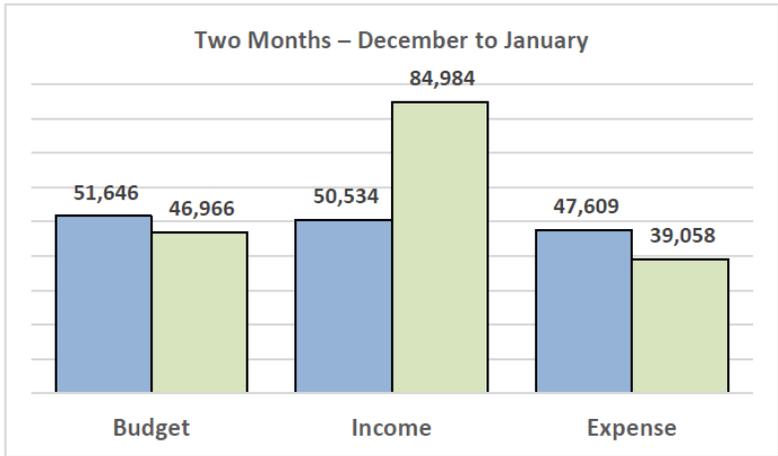
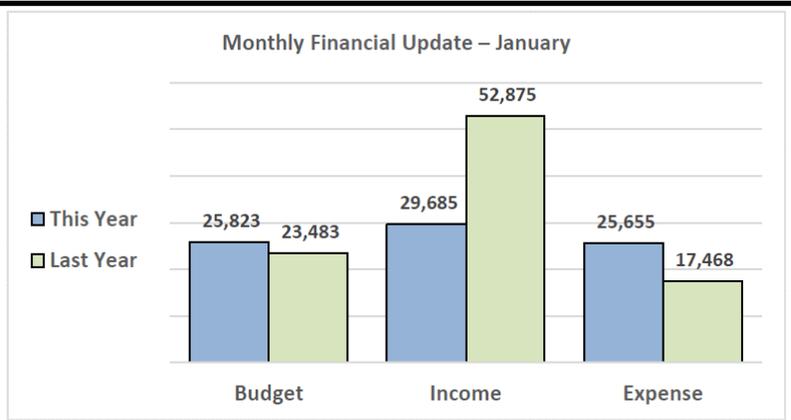
a corporate life that develops true communal spirit. Even the very word **community** is derived from **commune** and its meaning of cooperative life together. This life together is built as we fellowship and share all aspects of life with one another.

Is there a scriptural warrant for fellowship? Absolutely! In the opening pages of Scripture, God informs us that it is not good for one person to be alone, so he created a woman to be with a man (Gen 2:18). If we fast forward thousands of years to the time of Christ, we notice that Jesus called his disciples to be with him (Mk 3:14) and for three years these 12 men went nearly everywhere Jesus went – they fished, they witnessed miracles, they preached, they ate together. And at the birth of the church, Acts 2:42 notes that the believers “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” And as we come to the end of the New Testament, the author of Hebrews reminds people of the importance of fellowship and not neglecting it.

*And let us consider how to stir up one another
to love and good works, not neglecting
to meet together, as is the habit of some,
but encouraging one another, and all the more
as you see the Day drawing near.*

Heb 10:24-25

So, people of God, make space for one another in your weekly life. Not just on Sunday morning, but all through the week. Catch a coffee with someone, do a project together, eat a meal, go on a walk, or even give someone a phone call and talk about life. Share what God is teaching you and ask about what God is teaching them. And don’t just do it with those you are comfortable with, extend the net of fellowship to an ever-widening circle of people in the church. In this way, you will be building up the body of Christ and strengthening your own soul too. May God make us a true community abounding in robust fellowship.



**HCC
January
Giving**

The week of January 23, 6 members of our congregation delivered 6 meals to 3 Family Promise families in Bellingham and Ferndale. We may not be able any longer "to break bread together" with the families as we did in the past, but we bring the "bread" and more to them and bless them in this way. Thank you to each of you who blessed our Family Promise families this past month...and the past year.

The next opportunity to serve will be in May. In the meantime, please pray for the families who are working so hard to put their lives back together and to find housing.

A special thank you to Terry Vander Woude who has been helping with Family Promise the past months. You will be missed! We are hoping and praying that you will find a place in Bonners Ferry where you will continue to bless others as you have blessed so many in Bellingham and in our congregation with your enthusiasm and willingness to serve.

**Family
Promise
Update**

By
Lorraine B

Greet One Another

By Philip B

Praise and glory be to our God that even while restrictions due to COVID abound in our state, we have seen more visitors and more new members joining. As a member of the Vitality Team, I feel like the work is being done for us with no effort on our part, for which I certainly can't complain! And many thanks to those who have put in the work of inviting people to visit us. But I have also taken time to think about how God might want to use us to grow. I think back to my first time or two at Hope In Christ and how I was welcomed. I was greeted warmly, so warmly it was a little unsettling. Within a minute of having a cup of juice in my hand, I was already approached for conversation; in five minutes, I found myself in conversation with five of the men of this church. Putting aside my feeling of being descended upon and outnumbered five to one (some are fine with that; not everyone is as introverted as me, after all), it was an experience to talk to five Christian strangers—all of whom were old enough to be my father.

Before the pandemic, we did an assessment of our strengths and liabilities as a congregation. Topping the list of liabilities was that we are an aging congregation, and my first interactions left me with a very moribund impression of Hope In Christ Church. It wasn't until my fourth visit or so that people within a decade of me said hello (Pastor Scott notwithstanding). It really made fitting in difficult that people my own age didn't want to greet me (maybe because I don't have kids like they do?). Either that, or y'all thought I was also in my sixties, which for the sake of my own ego, I really hope not.

Why would something like this matter? I believe the answer lies in a couple factors. First, the generation gap is a real influence in our society, as the number of differences between generations is as vast as the differences themselves. It's harder now for people from different generations to click when meeting for the first time. Compounding this is that the latter half of the 20th century showed that adherence to the faith has

diminished in our society with each generation. More younger people are abandoning the church as soon as their parents stop forcing them to attend. And as



was noted recently, there are many in our neighborhoods who may believe that something higher exists, but they cannot yet—or maybe are reluctant to—name the God we serve as that “something.” The early Christian church served as a social hub as well as a spiritual one. Those who are searching currently probably aren’t like us on a spiritual level, but perhaps if they were greeted by those closer to them on a social level, the discomfort they feel on a spiritual level would be easier to help, to help them find the One who can heal them. But even if they are believers, I believe people in uncomfortable social settings will tend to gravitate towards anything remotely similar to them.

I don’t want to discourage anyone at all, especially if hospitality is one of your spiritual gifts. By all means, use it as the Spirit gives it to you. If the Spirit of God leads you to greet someone, obey! That said, I want to encourage the younger parents, the “Gen X-ers” of our church (as we have very few millennials in our membership), to prayerfully consider if they’re being called to be more proactive in welcoming younger visitors to our church. And to kindly ask the elderly members to encourage them to do so and then let them be first. Like Abraham’s servant asking for a sign that led to Rebekah, I asked for a sign that led me to Hope In Christ Church. If I hadn’t done that, I don’t know if I’d have chosen HCC, or any CRC church in the area, to be honest, because my experience was the same at every single one: no one from my generation introduced themselves to me. At non-denominational churches I visited, nobody ever greeted me after the service. Ever. Even as shy and hesitant to open up as I am, that’s unacceptable.

The good news though, is that I’m already seeing some of this. I’m seeing the members of our congregation, who have children at home, taking the initiative in greeting some of the younger visitors. I emphatically want to encourage more of this, across our whole denomination. I believe that if we want to see a wider array of ages in our congregations, those closest in age to those gaps need to step up and drive the welcome wagon, as they are led and emboldened by the Spirit, and mentored by the experienced.

And no, the irony of me being the one to say all this isn’t lost on me either.

If Not Now - When?

By George E. Miller



Why is it that we never seem to have enough time for God's house or God's work? We always have time for other things, such as watching TV, working around the house, or going on some type of outing. If something is a pleasure, we always seem to find time; but when it comes to God's house or God's work, it is the same old excuse: "I don't have the time."

I felt this way (like a lot of other people) because of my job. I felt that my job was so demanding, as far as the time spent in getting ready for work, the work itself, and trying to unwind after I got home from work. You see, I am a state traffic officer; I work for the California Highway Patrol. The working hours are long, plus I put in many hours in court. I felt that I just did not have the time to involve myself in God's work—why, I didn't really have much time even to spend with my family!

God had been dealing with me for quite a long time to study and to show myself worthy, for God had told me that He had a work for me to do. Maybe I was too scared to let God have His way in my life for fear of what He might ask me to do—or maybe it was the same old excuse: "I just don't have the time." Whatever the reason, I had not obeyed God.

Then it happened - December 1, 1972, at 1:00 a.m. I was getting back into my patrol unit when I slipped and twisted my right ankle. At the time I felt that that was all I had done. It was a very minor thing, I assumed.

However, the next day when I visited my family doctor, I found out that I had not only twisted my right ankle, but I had also twisted my right knee and hip. The most severe damage had been done to my knee where the nerves which control the circulation to the lower part of the right leg had been impaired. The doctor said that I would be off from work from six to eight weeks, depending on how I responded to physical therapy.

After two or three days of nothing to do but lying around and watching TV—the doctor made me sit in a chair and keep my leg elevated in order to keep the swelling down—I was becoming very bored. Without even realizing it, I reached over to my desk and picked up one of the Church Training Course (CTC) books that had been on my desk for over a year.

I started to read it; and before I knew it, I had become so engrossed that the hours had just flown by. After I finished the test, I was quite surprised to find that I had actually enjoyed the book.

By December 10, I had completed the first five CTC books.

With this, I realized that the Lord had been dealing with me for quite a long time; however, I still don't know what He wants me to do. But I am sure that if I stay faithful to Him that He will tell me what He wants of me. It is a shame that the Lord had to put me down in order to get me to listen to Him.

After I had finished the first five courses, I was thrilled with the fact that I had enjoyed the courses so very much. Most of all I hadn't gotten bored as I usually do when I try to read or study, which is one of my drawbacks. The Lord had given me that one all-important element - *time*. It was the one thing, it seemed, that I didn't have enough of in order to give myself to God and to His work.

By this time, my wife and pastor were both very pleased with my newfound interests; and with their prayers and encouragement, I went on and continued with the courses. By January 14, 1973, had completed twenty-six courses; and on March 4, I received my Master Christian Service Training Diploma from Pastor J. H. Whipple and our state youth and Christian education director, Troy Baggett. This was a very proud moment in my life, for I felt that, because of my preparation, I could be a better Christian and be able to do more for God and His kingdom.

During this time of illness, I was impressed with the following thought:

If not now—when?

If not now, when are you going to pray?

If not now, when are you going to read your Bible?

If not now, when are you going to study?

If not now, when are you going to start tithing?

If not now, when are you going to visit?

If not now, when are you going to witness?

If not now, when are you going to involve yourself in the work of the church?

This article was originally published in *The Church of God Evangel*, Volume 63, Number 12, August 27, 1973.

Election of New Elders and Deacons

Once again it is time to elect new people to serve as either an Elder or a Deacon. The Council has given much thought and prayer in selecting a new slate of people who might/would be willing and able to serve in this capacity. I, along with Jennifer Boer, will have completed our three year term as deacons. Being a deacon was not only a privilege, it was also an honor. This experience was a joy and I received countless blessings. My prayer for anyone who is asked to serve, pray fervently for clarity and heed the calling of our Lord to accomplish the work at Hope in Christ Church.

Philippians 4:15 "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."

I Corinthians 1:8a "He will keep you strong to the end."

Isaiah 41:1b "Do not fear, for I am with you."

Blessings to All,
Ruth S

Dear Church Family

As many of you know, we have sold our home in Bellingham and are in the process of moving to Bonners Ferry, Idaho. We have been attending Hope in Christ Church since August 1972, which is when we were married.



We have made many friends while attending this church and will miss you all very much. We want to thank you for your friendship during these many years. We hope you will keep in touch with us and if you plan a road trip, that you will include coming to see us. Currently, we are planning to attend church on March 6 before heading out Monday morning to Bonners Ferry with our last load of furniture.

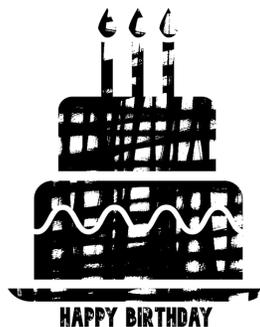
Call the church office for updated contact information for Len and Terry.

March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 12:15 Lunchtime Zoom Prayer 6:30 p.m. Boer Bible Study	2 HCC Day2Pray 11:45 a.m. Elders Meeting	3 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Deacons Meeting	4	5
6 9:30 a.m. Worship, Communion 11:00 Sunday School	7 G.E.M.S.	8 12:15 Lunchtime Zoom Prayer	9 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study 7 p.m. Council	10 6:30 a.m. Men's Group	11	12
13 <i>Daylight Savings</i> 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 Sunday School 4:30 p.m. Jesus Gathering 7:00 p.m. Kaemingk Bible Study	14 Friendship Bible Study	15 12:15 Lunchtime Zoom Prayer 6:30 p.m. Boer Bible Study	16 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study	17 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 	18 April Heartbeat Articles Due	19
20 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 Sunday School	21 G.E.M.S.	22 12:15 Lunchtime Zoom Prayer	23 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study 7 p.m. Worship Planning Team	24 6:30 a.m. Men's Group	25	26
27 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 7:00 p.m. Kaemingk Bible Study	28 Friendship Bible Study					

March Birthdays

2 John K
4 Anthony M
10 Ruth S
19 Caleb R
22 Esther V



25 Miriam S
26 Terry V
29 Alice Sk
29 Katie M

It is never our intention to leave anyone's name off of the birthday list. Please let us know if that has happened. 8
Thank you!