

Week Eight: Church

Scripture references:

Twos and threes:

Genesis 2:17-22; Ecclesiastes 4:7-12; Matthew 18:15-20
Luke 10:1-17

One anothering:

Zechariah 7:9; John 13:34
Romans 12:10, 13:8, 14:13, 15:7, 15:14, 16:16

On church being a set of people with a specific Jesus-related purpose (*note pronouns and verb use*):

Matthew 16:18; Acts 9:31, 11:22, 11:26, 12:5, 13:1, 14:27 (*etc.*)

Romans 16:5 & 1 Corinthians 16:19 ("*the church that meets at ___*")

1 Corinthians 1:2 (*what makes the people church*)

1 Corinthians 11:18 ("*when you come together as church*").



Points to take away:

1. We were made to be in communion with God through Jesus.
2. We were made to live in deep connection (companionship) — in twos and threes.
3. We were made to follow Jesus in a community of disciples.
4. We were charged with the great commandment (love God, love neighbor as yourself) and the great commission (make disciples, baptize them, and teach them), to be done as disciples in community ("one anothering")
5. Church is the living out of communion, companionship, community, commandment, and commission.

A very few resources for further exploration:

- § The Jesus-followers you know. Make them your church.
- § The people you don't know (or don't know if they're Jesus-followers). Invite them into your church (which may not be the same as Sunday worship.) Get to know their stories, and tell them yours. And let them change your church.
- § Neil Cole, *Organic Church* (Jossey-Bass: 2005). Being church at Denny's, or in a parking lot at 3 in the morning.
- § Doug Pagitt, *Church Re-Imagined: The Spiritual Formation of People in Communities of Faith* (Zondervan: 2005). One community's experience of being a new church in an ancient way.
- § Diana Butler Bass, *The Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church* (Alban Institute: 2004). Transforming life in mainline congregations by ceasing to go to church and starting to live as church.
- § <http://www.newmonasticism.org/> — A website for the new monastics: people living in intentional community as church together; also see Christian Century's article October 18, 2005, at <http://www.christiancentury.org/article.lasso?id=1399>. While monasticism of any kind is a particular calling, the new monasticism points to a postmodern rethinking of the nature of "church".

