



Click here for this weeks' video: --> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgrTLPu2pao>

ConnectEd: Study Guide

a Christian community of fresh hope

Redeeming authentic community (koinonia) INTRO **Sun 23rd April 2023**

WELCOME: Take time to watch the clip listed above, make notes as you go to engage with this guide

This is the INTRO to our new series "Redeeming authentic community," based on the New Testament Greek term "Koinonia" – the video is on the ConnectEd YouTube channel.

The focus of teaching each term is based on outcomes of reflections on **Isa 43 (esp v 19)** – as we continue to sense God is already doing something new, inviting us as a church community to perceive it and partner in. And from **Acts 2:42** four themes also shape our direction this year.

Connect themes of 2023



Perceive the **new thing** God is doing

Isa 43:19

All the believers **devoted** themselves

- (i) to the apostles' **teaching**, and
- (ii) to fellowship (**koinonia**), and
- (iii) to **sharing** in meals (including the **Lord's Supper**), and
- (iv) to **prayer**. **Acts 2:42**

Q: In what ways do you think the themes from these scriptures could/should direct and impact us – personally and/or as a small group and/or as a church community?

This was the introductory message in this new series:

- What key points do you recall from the previous series on "Redeeming the Gospel?"
- What did you learn from that series you have been able to apply to your life in practice?

This week's message aimed to introduce the series by giving an overview of the topic. It defined "koinonia" as a noun meaning "fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, social interaction, a gift jointly contributed." Some of these definitions convey different ideas which we will seek to unpack in this series, as we seek to restore an understanding of what the early church would have understood when the word koinonia was used.

The introduction contrasted "western culture" with other cultures and indicated that; "Western culture," is increasingly individualistic while other cultures value the primacy of family/village

- What are your thoughts about that contrast? Do you agree/disagree and why?
- Do you think western culture is better or worse off than other cultures in this area?

One of the major challenges the church (including Connect) has to face, is our relationship with the culture of the world around us. Followers of Jesus should be salt and light but at the same time not so embedded in our world's culture we're indistinguishable, also not so embedded in church traditions that we become completely irrelevant and have no impact in our world.

- What do you think are the greatest challenges for the church in remaining significant enough to have a voice in our community, but still being plainly Christian?
- If the church is intended to be a "community" what challenges are presented by the individualism, we encounter in the culture around us?

The introduction also indicated; "Western culture," is increasingly prosperous, busy and focussed on "doing," while other cultures value the little that they have, value time and focus on "being."

- What are your thoughts about those contrasting values? Do you agree/disagree and why?
- Do you think western culture is better or worse off than other cultures in these areas?

READ: Luke 11:37 – 12:3

Jesus is direct in his critique of people who are self proclaimed "experts" in their grasp of information about the law, but who fail to put it into practice. Jesus compares their hypocrisy with yeast, a very small amount impacts the whole.

- What is the significance of what Jesus teaches here, for us as Christians today?
- In what ways can things "whispered" in the church, end up being shouted for all to hear?
- In what ways can we ensure that we are people who practice what we preach?

Life takes place in a context, alongside other people and considering and caring for people as individuals doesn't have to mean we become "individualistic" in our focus. Each individual is placed in a community by God, has a place in community and has purpose in being there.

READ: 1 Cor 12:12-27

While salvation involves a personal relationship with God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Paul is clear here that our journey in the Christian life is done as part of a community that we are called to contribute to, based on our gifts and abilities.

- How would you summarise what Paul says here, in your own words?
- Looking around your group share what you think each person brings to Connect church?

Church statistics indicate that there are a growing numbers of "nones" and "dones," where "nones" are people who know nothing of Jesus – which did not use to be true of our culture in Australia – and "dones" who are people who once called themselves Christian but who now for various reasons, are done with the church.

- Who do you know who are "nones" or "dones"?
- How do you think we could help one another in reaching out to our "nones" and "dones"?

The concluding questions that were presented were:

- Q. Who will you engage in koinonia with this week?
- Q. What are you learning that you will act on this week, so you can say you actually "know" something?
- Q. What will you STOP doing to experience BEING with God?
- Q. Who are the "nones" and "dones" that you already know?
- Q. Who has God called you to journey with on purpose?

Pray together:

Take time as a LIFEgroup to pray for one another, pray that we would each be encouraged to pay the price to be part of an authentic gospel community. Pray that we would encourage one another as Christians in a broken world, to share good news as we engage in ways that will make our world a better place, without compromising our character. Continue to pray for our church leadership, that they would discern God's plans and purposes for us as his people and for people in our neighbourhood and in our world who don't yet know Jesus.