

Koi-n-nia

1. Warm-up question: No church is perfect. Where there are people, there will always be surprises. What's the weirdest thing that's ever happened to you in church?
2. Jesus had a dream of creating a movement of people who would share his truth and grace with the world in transformative ways. He called this movement "the church." The Greek word for church is *ecclesia* [eck-luh-SEE-uh], which means an assembly of people who come together for a common purpose. Jesus gives us a penetrating glimpse into the kind of movement he wished to birth in a parable he tells in the Gospel of Luke. Read Luke 14:15-24.
 - a. Based on this parable, what did Jesus want his movement to be like?
 - b. Jeff invited us to picture a high school cafeteria where kids segregate into tables of people who are like them – the smart kids, the jocks, the cheerleaders, the artsy kids, with the misfits having to fend for themselves. He then invited us to imagine a student leader rising up who invites people of all types to share a common table. What would it feel like for a smart kid or a jock to move to that table? What would it feel like for a misfit to move to that table? What impact could that table have on the whole school?
3. After his resurrection, Jesus told his followers it was time to launch his movement. So they did. Acts 2 records what the movement looked like at its inception in the very first prototype church. Act 2 tells us that Peter preached the first sermon of the Christian era to an incredibly diverse group of people in the streets of Jerusalem and invited all who felt called to become part of the Jesus movement. Three thousand people responded. Then the book of Acts describes what it looked like, and meant, for those first Christians to "be church" together. Read Acts 2:37-47.
 - a. What most strikes you about this description of the first church? Which aspects of that church most resonate with you? Which aspects most challenge you?
 - b. A key Greek word is embedded in verse 42 – *koinonia* (koi-NO-nia) – a word many theologians feel best captures the essence of what the church is supposed to be. In most English translations, *koinonia* is rendered as "fellowship." But that misses multiple layers of meaning embedded in the Greek word. Here's a good working definition of *koinonia*: "Intimate spiritual communion and participative sharing in a common religious commitment and spiritual community." Jeff invited to focus on three key phrases in this definition.
4. **Intimate Spiritual Communion.** That means belonging. It means the relaxed, deep-breath feeling you get when you walk into a place that feels safe enough to let the "real you" come out, confident that you will be loved for who you are, not judged.
 - a. Do you get that feeling at LifeJourney? Why or why not?

- b. Why is it important for church to be safe space where the real you can come out?
 - c. There are many reasons why many different people don't feel comfortable in conventional churches. What are some of those reasons? Have you ever felt like a misfit in church? Why?
5. **Participative Sharing in a Common Religious Commitment.** At LifeJourney, we share a common commitment to learning to live in the ways of Jesus.
- a. What's an important spiritual lesson you've learned in your time at LifeJourney? There may be many, but pick one that stands out for you.
 - b. We don't learn something new every time we gather together. Often we're just reminded of what we already know and encouraged to live it. What are some of the ways we can encourage one another to live our faith?
6. **Participative Sharing in Spiritual Community.** Some people see church as a supplier of spiritual products that they passively consume as they wish. Others see church as a co-op where everybody shares ownership and responsibility.
- a. What's the difference between seeing yourself as a consumer of church versus seeing yourself as a member in a church co-op? Why does this difference matter?
 - b. Jeff suggested three key traits of someone who sees themselves a member in a church co-op:
 - Presence.** Jeff said, "To do great things here, we need you to be here. I know life is crazy, but how often can you be here?" Why does regularity matter to the church and to you personally?
 - Service.** What form of service in the church do you most enjoy? (BTW, we have three service teams right now who really need more volunteers: ushers, mowers, and building cleaners.)
 - Investing.** Jeff said, "When we become regular givers – at any level – we cross over a psychological line from consumer of the Jesus movement to investor in it." What do you think he meant? Do you agree? Why or why not?
7. Jeff told how in Guatemala, our missions team was paired with 23 high school seniors from a South Carolina church. When our team shared our Affirmation Poem at dinner one evening, the kids from Advent were blown away and stayed up till midnight talking about it. They fell in love with our diverse team of people. After returning home, they even Facetimed one of our team members they nicknamed Pistachio Diva, passed the phone around, and said, "I love you." What does a story like that suggest for why so many people need a church like ours and the difference we can make in helping the Jesus movement live more fully into the dream?

Want to participate in our Door Hanger Outreach? Email PastorJeff@LifeJourney.church.