

Begin Anew

Belonging in Community

November 18, 2018

1. "Fitting in" isn't the same as "belonging"
2. What if we spent our energy and time to find a group into which we fit instead of trying to fit into a group?
3. It is good to belong to a group. But it's best to belong to a group that also creates belonging for others!
4. "ekklesia" = "gathering of God's people"
5. *As the Father has sent me, I am sending you...* (Jn. 20:21).
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifnJtkAnBq4>
7. *Who* is the church?
 - A. The Church is a community of people, a family of faith, the body of Christ.
8. *There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus* (Gal. 3:28).
9. Church as "family" and "body" - *live together in peace. Be understanding. Love one another like members of the same family. Be kind and tender...* (1 Pt. 3:8, NIRV)...
Together you are the body of Christ, and each of you is a part of that body (1 Cor. 12:27).
10. *Who* is the church?
 - A. The Church is a community of people, a family of faith, the body of Christ.
 - B. The church is an upside-down community.
11. *You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be the first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many* (Mt. 20:25-28).
12. *Who* is the church?
 - A. The Church is a community of people, a family of faith, the body of Christ.
 - B. The church is an upside-down community.
 - C. The church is a Q+A community.

13. *[We have] the hope of life forever, which God promised to us before time began...*
(Titus 1:2, NCV).

14. What do we have to offer a world filled with guilt and shame and fear and despair?!
Real, authentic friendship in place of loneliness.
Forgiveness in place of shame and guilt.
Meaning to life in place of emptiness.
Peace in place of fear and despair.

16. 3 practical ways to cultivate belonging:

1. Look for ways that you are similar with others instead of focusing on ways that you are different.
2. Accept differences.
3. Watch your words.

17. Take Home Q: How have you experienced the church as a community or family or body or as an upside down community or as a reason for hope?