

3a. In the form of a debate, this question needs to be considered with some factual bases. Are there examples of strong partnerships producing great results? Does anyone know of a church that has succeeded in such a partnership? Mainly Music, Kiddie Gym, community Creche, Toy Library, Care and Craft, Meals on Wheels ... just some examples.

3b – 3f may well be looped around and explored with a number of examples/possibilities. Try and make sure that there is a broad range of options to talk about.

3b. This asks, simply, what unites us.

3c. And this asks, what divides us. It makes sense to note the difficulties and then to ask, can they be overcome?

3d. You may like to note that the difficulties can be with any of the partners – including the local church.

3e. This question focuses on the positive outcomes that could be generated by a partnership and what the church might offer to that outcome.

3f. What would be of benefit to the local church if a partnership was entered into? Is change required of the local church – and are they willing to change?

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## Exploring Koinonia

## Leader's Guide Three

### Partnership in Action

Begin by reviewing the concepts of *koinonia* partnership: commonality, diversity, journeying together and sharing gifts. Have any new insights developed since the last study?

#### 1. Building *koinonia* within the congregation

This first section encourages people to look at their own congregation in terms of *koinonia* partnership and discover new insights into the way they exist and function. Keep in mind the image of the partnership of the fishermen.

1a. Share the reading (Acts 2:42-45) and reflect on the reading in terms of commonality, diversity, journeying together and sharing gifts. How was the early church modeling *koinonia* partnership?

1b. The first question is all about what holds the congregation together. Why have people gathered as a congregation? What is the common vision that they have? Are there more than one thing in common? (probably, yes.)

1c. In contrast to the unifying elements, what can be said about diversity in the congregation? Are there different views about things?

1d. How are these differences shared, expressed, coped with? It may be important to ask cultural questions – how does a congregation become multicultural?

1e. “Full net” moments refers back to the fishermen story. Times when the work of being church was really wonderful and teamwork seemed to be easy to come by.

## 2

1f. Again, referring to the fishermen. When was there a stormy moment – when the calm waters were disturbed, when partnership was under threat, when it was difficult to get motivated?

1g. This question can be both theoretical and practical. What opportunities are there for people to give (in a variety of ways) to the church? It may pay to make a list of the ways and then ask how the list can be extended – what new ways could people give?

1h. What does receiving help from members mean? If the church receives, is it good at giving thanks – or do we just accept quietly. Is receiving an obligation in a voluntary organization? How can the congregation receive gifts better?

### **2. Building *koinonia* with another congregation**

In this section the focus is on a congregation-congregation partnership. This may be within a parish (8.30am-10am, morning-evening), around the district (urban-rural), or across denominations.

2a. The reading (Galatians 2:8-9) highlights the two “missions” of the early church – to Jews and Gentiles (and yes, this is the third time using this passage). It seems that from the beginning the church was faced with the two sides of unity and diversity. The reading should help explore further that idea – can we affirm the mission imperative of another congregation?

When identifying a congregation, think of a realistic example. Some groups may want to go through these questions more than once with a number of different congregations.

2b. Explore the uniting factors between the congregations – think theologically, physically, sociologically. It would be nice to think that this list is longer than the next one!

## 3

2c. It should be pointed out that acknowledging diversity is not necessarily highlighting barriers or difficulties. Again, these could be considered in a wide variety of ways including worship practices, outreach, visibility, even buildings.

2d. This question asks if diversity is a barrier – hopefully people will say it is not.

2e. In some ways this question is similar to 2b about common interest. But the reflection on the journey is important. A newly established church is in a different place to a traditional denominational congregation – what influence would that have on a partnership? The group may like to respond whether being on a similar journey is helpful or hindering – two ageing congregations coming together will simply make a slightly larger ageing congregation.

2f. What gifts would the congregation take into a *koinonia* partnership with another congregation – be specific in the example. Gifts should be interpreted fairly broadly – talents, money, buildings, traditions, etc.

2g. We generally go into partnership because there is some sort of benefit for us – this question asks what we might gain from a partnership.

### **3. Building *koinonia* with the community**

This section looks at how a local church might interact with a community group to form an effective partnership for mission. Such a group could be a charity organization, a service group/company, a commercial firm – the possibilities are endless.