

4. SHARING GIFTS

4-. It will be important to understand that sharing gifts involves both a giver and a receiver – in exploring these questions challenge people to see opportunities to both give and receive in partnerships.

4a. As people explore the idea of working together on the fishing boat, encourage them to think about giving and receiving – sometimes it is hard to accept help. This connects with a common goal and diversity.

4b. Asking this question of communion – it has both theological and practical implications. Do we only receive at communion? What rituals help explain our giving and receiving?

4c. The reading (Philippians 4:12-16) contains the commendation of Paul to the church in Philippi. Simply explore what this reading says to people, but keep in mind the idea of sharing as partners.

4d. The church has often seen itself as the strength of society – is asking for help a sign of weakness? How do we, at times, give or receive without humility – perhaps there are some examples.

4e. This is a chance to think specifically about partnerships that the local church may enter into. Try and have the discussion centre around both the giving and receiving of resources, talents and time.

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Exploring Koinonia Partnership in Action

Leader's Guide Two

There are two readings to particularly focus on throughout this study – Luke 5:1-11 and 1 Corinthians 10:16-17. The Luke reading was introduced in the last study and the 1 Corinthians reading is given below with *koinonia* written in.

1 Corinthians 10 ¹⁶Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a *koinonia*/participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a *koinonia*/participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

When thinking of a “partnership with the local church” it will be important to identify a connection that the local church is making with some other group in a partnered form. Examples may be (and this is by no means a comprehensive list): Girl’s or Boy’s Brigade, Youth work, Food bank, clothing shop, Care and Craft, Meals on Wheels, hall hirers, church or local social agencies, other churches.

1. COMMONALITY

1-. Open the discussion by asking what people understand by ‘commonality.’ Various synonyms could be: common unity, togetherness, commonness (opposite to individuality).

1a. Ask people to make a list of the things that the fishermen (in Luke 5) could have had in common.

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1b. Take time to reflect on the practice of communion - in your congregation, your local churches, the national church, and even internationally. It would be great for the group to explore ways in which the practice of communion tries to show unity (ie one loaf, being around a table). If possible reflect on the various traditions of the denominations – Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, Christian Churches, Pentecostal or Apostolic.

1-. Philippians 2:1-2. Read the verses aloud and ask for general comments. Ask if it is fair to interpret these verses as saying that “if you have *koinonia* with the Spirit ... you should be like-minded and be one in spirit and purpose.”

1c. If there is a call to a common unity, what barriers stop this occurring?

2. DIVERSITY

2-. Ask what people what ‘diversity’ means to them. You may like to challenge them by asking if diversity is the same as division, or is it a direct opposite of unity.

2a. Reflect on the fishermen’s story again – try and identify the different roles that the fishermen would have taken on the boats.

2b. Share the reading from Galatians 2:8-10 and use the knowledge that people already have to explore the different personalities of the apostles – Peter, James and John.

2c. Explore with people the question about diversity in our communion services – thinking both theologically and practically. (Individual cups say something different to a single chalice).

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2d. Reflect on a partnership that the local church has (the same one or a different one from 1.) and consider how diversity is expressed in this partnership. Ask if this diversity is a positive or negative element (or hopefully, neutral).

3. JOURNEYING TOGETHER

3-. Get some initial impressions about what being on a journey as partners might mean. The hope is that the idea of journey is conveyed in the ups and downs, the ins and outs of life as we move through time.

3a. Look again at the fishermen. How is their work like a journey? This may be reflected in the fact that fishermen are together on the lake and on the shore – when there is a storm they still are in partnership.

3b. Then consider communion and how the idea of journeying together may be expressed through the Lord’s Supper. It may be good to reflect on the “family meal” concepts that are behind communion and how families do change over time.

3c. The two readings (Philippians 1:3-6, 2 Corinthians 1:6-7) both have elements of time passing within them. Explore together how the sense of *koinonia* links in with journey and time. There is no right or wrong answer – but an opportunity to explore partnership as moving through time.

3d. This question invites people to explore another specific example of partnership in the congregation – and explores the relationship in terms of change and time.