

Everyone Everywhere, Growing in Faith. Everyday Faith Event 2023- Together

In Luke's Gospel, we can read of two companions who travelled together, shared a profound religious experience together, and grew in faith together (24.13-35). Cleopas and an unnamed disciple did what many of us would do when confused, they talked to each other. They were shocked and confused about the recent crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ; therefore, together they sought to work out what had actually happened. Naturally we hope to learn from the experience and wisdom of our friends. However, while travelling together on the seven-mile-long road from Jerusalem to Emmaus this pair of two confused companions became a group of three. The new companion helped to explain the recent miraculous events by teaching them the Scriptures. When sitting down to share a meal and breaking bread together it dawned upon Cleopas and his friend that it was Jesus himself travelling with them, teaching them, and eating with them.

Just as the presence of Christ was revealed to Cleopas and his friend in the breaking of bread, today Christians across the globe continue to recognise and acknowledge Christ's sacrifice, love, and presence through services of Holy Communion. Togetherness is essential for Communion, this is why we echo the words of Romans 12.4-5 when we proclaim: "Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread." Holy Communion is not the only way we practice our faith together, however in it we can identify multiple illustrations of our togetherness. We find examples of how to live life together, in communion with each other. We can learn how to grow, mature, and flourish in faith together.

In Holy Communion, we see elements of togetherness and our corporate faith through praying together, offering intercessions for each other and with each other. We read, receive, discuss, and are nourished together by the Word of God. We worship and praise our loving God with one common voice. We confess for the times we let our companions down by not loving our neighbours as ourselves. We affirm our common faith together through the words of the creeds. We share peace with each other. We go out into the world together to share God's love. We offer hospitality to each other and break bread with one another. While all of these actions take place in Holy Communion, in flourishing and growing Christian communities these aspects of togetherness take place throughout our lives as we seek to encourage and build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5.11).

Fundamentally, our faith is transformative. It is life-giving and life-changing. However, the fruits of faith do not only affect how we view ourselves and how we individually act within the world; rather faith affects how we perceive the world around us and therefore how we perceive others. Faith allows us to love together, and our family is expanded when we recognise our neighbours and companions as our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We might recognise when we are growing in faith together when we share in life together. When we read the Scriptures together, learn together, pray together, eat together, be honest to each other, listen to each other, and serve each other's needs. Looking to Holy Communion, we can learn some of the aspects of togetherness that allow us all to support each other's flourishing in faith.

Reflection by Edward Day