

Weekly Newsletter: 25th October 2022

Reflection: Community - A Struggle to Fit

By Darby Strickland (taken from <https://www.ccef.org/community-a-struggle-to-fit/>)

When it comes to community in the church, many people feel like onlookers. For many, deep fellowship seems far off. Some feel excluded because they “do not fit in,” and others are unsure how to engage.

In the church of Jesus, this should not be. All believers should feel welcome and invited to be an active part of its fellowship. But in truth, we tend to herd together in groups based on similarities like being married or single, our children’s ages, our life stages, political preferences, or professional positions. We feel more comfortable around people like us.

God wants us to fight against this tendency and build a community that embraces people who are different from us, including people on the margins. The apostle Peter tells us:

As you come to him [Christ], a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:4–5).

Believers are like living stones, and God is shaping and fitting us together into a place where he dwells. But forming this type of community does not come naturally to us. It is a blessing, then, that God is shaping each one of us so that we are more like Christ, the living stone. He moulds and forms us so that we fit together. I need to be willing to be reshaped so that someone quite different from me might find a place of belonging next to me. God wants us to look more like who he created us to be for the benefit of one another.

I might have to grow in patience as I listen to others who take longer to formulate their thoughts. At the same time, others will have to grow in gentleness in how they respond. God does not want my rough edges rubbing against you, though they will, and will continue to do so until glory. But my rough edges will make you smoother, and your edges will help shape me. When I embrace people who are different from me, it stands to reason that my heart will need to be reshaped so we can fit together. This is not always a pleasant prospect, but it is a beautiful one.

Let me tell you one way my family has been blessed by people who have embraced this. We have recently started attending a new church, where only a few teenagers attend. I have noticed three couples that seek to connect with my children. Each Sunday, they spend 20 minutes drawing out my kids’ interests and enjoyments, making my children feel valued. I would imagine they would prefer having adult conversations;

however, they have chosen to plant their feet in front of my children, whose concerns are quite different than theirs. Consequently, my children have felt loved and feel a sense of belonging to this new church family.

When I have sought to lean in and love people who are not like me, it helps me to remember that my relationship with Christ is powerful and can reshape everything about me. Consequently, I can trust that he is at work, shaping everything about you, too. I need this truth in front of me when God is not prioritizing the things I would like him to address with you first. And you need this truth when I am difficult for you to love. We have so much to celebrate and encourage one another in what Christ is doing as he shapes and builds us together. We are all heading in the same direction and will all arrive at the same place. There is much to celebrate as we watch one another become more like Christ, even when it is at a snail's pace.

Yes, community is messy and complicated. Sometimes it seems hopeless, especially for those on the margins. Christ was one of those on the margin, knowing rejection. We see him ministering to the uninvited throughout the Gospels, so we know they are on his heart. We may struggle with wanting to be reshaped since it is easier to just stick to the relationships that come naturally to us. But if people on the fringes are on the Lord's heart, they need to be on ours. We are meant to be built together into a spiritual house for the benefit of one another and for the glory of the Lord. Ask yourself: Are you willing to be shaped for someone else's good and God's glory? If the answer is yes, delight in watching God build his house.

Dougie Laurie

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Dougie Laurie last night (Monday) in the Gilmerton Care Home. Pray for Cathie, their daughter Gillian, and the family as they grieve. Details of the funeral will follow.

Book Group – this Saturday

The Book Group is meeting this Saturday at 3.30pm at Anncri's to discuss *Together Through the Storm* by Sally Sims. Please contact Anncri (anncrisr@gmail.com) for more information.

This Sunday

Joe will be in Lewis this weekend and we're grateful to Jon Gemmell for taking our Sunday morning service. It's a fifth Sunday and, instead of a praise evening, we'll have an evening service at 6pm. Steven Randall, a student at ETS and Heather's grandson, will lead us in a reflection and we'll have a time of worship together.

Equip – Sunday 6th November

Our next Equip session will take place on Sunday 6th November at 6pm on the topic of *Safeguarding Children (and Grandchildren) in an Age of Pornography*. Discipling youth is a community project. All of us need to be thinking about what we can do to help young disciples pursue God in an age of sexual temptation. At this Equip session we are going to take up the difficult topic of pornography and think about what we need to do as a gospel community in order to raise children- and grandchildren- who are willing to say 'no' to temptation in order to say 'yes' to Jesus.

Ladies' Breakfast – Saturday 5th November



November is fast approaching and it's almost time for our first Ladies' Breakfast! Come along to the church on Saturday 5th November from 9.30-11am.

We're planning to eat at 9.30am and then the programme will begin at 10am.

We're looking for an idea of numbers so please let Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) know if you're coming and haven't already signed up. We'd also like it to be a 'bring and share' breakfast so please contact Liz if you'd like to bring something along.

Please be praying as plans are finalised and we get together on the 5th - Norma Shippin will be our speaker. We'll also have an interview, book review, time to pray and our breakfast together ☺

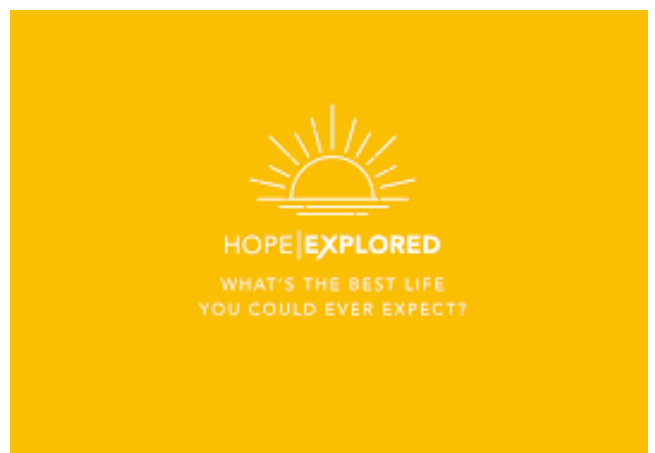
Christmas is coming!

Our Christmas Carol Service will take place in the evening on Sunday 18th December. In November the choir will start their practices after the morning services – their first practice will be after the service on **Sunday 6th November**. All singers are welcome (there is no need to be able to read music), please come along even if you have never been part of the choir before. Contact Norma Shippin (shippins@sky.com) for more information.

Hope Explored – Sunday 6th November

We are planning on starting a Hope Explored Course after the morning services in November. Hope Explored is an introduction to Christianity and is for anyone new to the Christian faith or who would like an introduction to the gospel.

It is also for anyone in the church family interested in evangelism and wanting to see how the course is run. Our hope is to offer it to the local community in the new year. Please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) if you have any questions or would like to be involved.



SASRA Remembrance Devotional

SASRA are once again offering resources for Remembrance Day. The devotional covers the dates 23 October to 13 November and is available online [here](#). Hard copies will also be available at the church.

Harvest Appeal



Every year, at this time, we have our Harvest Appeal in aid of Tearfund. If you wish to give to help support this important work you can do so via the church bank account (details [here](#)) or in the offering plate on Sunday mornings. Please clearly mark your gift "Harvest".

Alternatively you can give direct to Tearfund [here](#). Thank you!

Mission Prayer Meeting – Saturday 12th November

Save the date! Our next Mission Prayer Meeting will take place on Saturday 12th November at 9am on Zoom. Please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) if you would like the Zoom codes and don't already receive them.

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday: Baby and Toddler Group at 10am;
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting on Zoom at 7pm.
- Thursday: Men's Discipleship Group at 10.30am in the church
- Saturday: Book Group at 3.30pm at Anncri's
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Jon Gemmell preaching.
 - Evening Service at 6pm



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