

Decision and Destiny

Created for Community Acts 2:42-47

Introduction:

1. *Human beings were created by a God who is community: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and it is into community with God and others that we have been invited when we give our lives to Christ.*
2. I have always thought that one of the massive problems associated with atheism is answering the question that if everything we see around us in the created realm, especially human beings, evolved from blind, impersonal forces, why is it that so much of the human experience revolves around that which is deeply, deeply personal?
3. How did those impersonal forms of matter decide to get so personal, so relational, so interested and capable of intimacy?
4. The first statement might catch some of you off-guard, but we're going to talk about it for a moment: Human beings were made by a God who is a community of persons.
5. And human beings were made for self-giving love to that God and to others.
6. Christianity is so very different from all other faiths or religions
7. Other religions are fear based and man trying to reach their god through ritual
8. Our God is a loving heavenly Father who reached down to us because of relationship
9. *1 John 4:8 says Godhead is what? Love. Love; it's relationship.*
10. We human beings were made by a God who is a community of persons.
11. This is what we have been invited into when we give our lives to Christ.
12. There comes a time when you just have to wrap your brain around this thing called relationship or community, and you've got to acknowledge that human beings were made by a God who is a community of persons.
13. That's what's been stamped into us irreversibly
14. You were made for self-giving love to God and to others.
15. You're never better than when you're loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and when you're in a self-giving kind of relationship with family and friends

Inter-related:

1. The Redwood trees – interconnected
2. Hence God has given us His Church which is the body of Christ on earth.
3. Through Christ we are bound together in a community of faith.
4. Belonging to Christ we belong to each other.
5. *Acts 2:44 says, "...ALL THAT BELIEVED WERE TOGETHER..."*
6. God, however has not left us on our own to run the race and fight the battle.
7. Our text reveals to us the proper focus of a community of believers - *Acts 2:42 says, "THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE APOSTLES' TEACHING AND TO FELLOWSHIP, TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD AND TO PRAYER."*

Community:

1. The experience of authentic community is one of the purposes God intends to be fulfilled by the church.
2. There are no Lone Ranger Christians
3. **Hebrews 10:25 not to, "...GIVE UP MEETING TOGETHER, AS SOME ARE IN THE HABIT OF DOING, BUT LET US ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER..."**
4. Henri Nouwen points out, "We are unified by our common weaknesses, our common failures, our common disappointments and our common inconsistencies."
5. Community creates amongst other things accountability e.g. bible reading
6. **Hosea 4:6 says "my people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge"**
7. When we grieve the Holy Spirit the result is the inability to focus on His Word or pray
8. William Cowper "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees"
9. You can change your destiny by the decisions you make re bible reading and praying
10. Step back and think of the impact those that gathered in Acts 2 had on the world .

Strength:

1. As we face the storms and temptations of life we receive strength from each other.
2. **Psalm 61:2** he cried out to God for help saying, "....**I CALL TO YOU....AS MY HEART GROWS FAINT....**" **Verse 5 "YOU HAVE GIVEN TO ME," he said, "THE HERITAGE OF THOSE WHO FEAR YOUR NAME..."**
3. Throughout our lives and especially during tough times, God desires to strengthen and empower

Ministry:

1. **Acts 2:44** says, "**ALL THE BELIEVERS WERE TOGETHER ...**"
2. Our union with Christ creates community responsibilities.
3. It is time for some of you to take responsibility and invest in others lives

Guidance:

1. **Psalm 73:24** the Psalmist "**YOU SHALL GUIDE ME WITH YOUR COUNSEL...**"
2. The community of faith is crucial to our well-being
3. **Ephesians 3:10** declares that "**GOD'S INTENT WAS THAT NOW, THROUGH THE CHURCH, THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD SHOULD BE MADE KNOWN.**"
4. Looking to the Lord's people we are much more apt to be guided down those paths that enrich our lives rather than wreck them.
5. our lives rather than wreck them.

Difficulties:

1. The mark of community - true biblical community - is not the absence of conflict and difficulties but the presence of a reconciling spirit.
2. In our humanness there are times when we hurt each other and the tendency is to pull away and go it alone.

Conclusion:

1. The journey of life and faith is often trying, difficult and painful.
2. **Ephesians 2:19** reminds us that we "**...YOU ARE NO LONGER FOREIGNERS AND ALIENS (SEPARATED FROM GOD), BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH GOD'S PEOPLE AND MEMBERS OF GOD'S HOUSEHOLD.**"

Acts 2:42 says that the early believers "**DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO FELLOWSHIP**"....to the community of faith.