

Further Steps – Week 3 – Disciplines of the New Life

Connect and review	Notes
<p>In the last session we saw that all who decided to follow Jesus under the inspired preaching of the Apostle Peter were baptised. But there were some other things that the early Christians practiced, that are part of the basics of our faith – and we are going to explore them today.</p> <p>To start with, let's read Acts 2 verses 41-42.</p>	
Inspire and engage	
<p>1. Learning (“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching”).</p> <p>For a while, new Christians were able to hear from the apostles (those who had been closest to Jesus during His ministry) about the things Jesus did and taught. Those apostles are, of course, long gone. But we have the teaching they and others have written down, which has become <i>The New Testament</i>. The earlier teaching of prophets and others (<i>The Old Testament</i>) has been added to this to give us the <i>Bible</i> that we can read today. (sometimes called the <i>Scriptures</i> – meaning ‘writings’).</p> <p>Reading: 2nd Timothy 3 verse 16.</p> <p>Question 1: Why is it important we should be diligent learners of the Bible?</p> <p>2. Meeting Together (“... the fellowship”).</p> <p>Reading: Hebrews 10 verse 25.</p> <p>At Renewal we have several opportunities to meet together regularly. Meeting to worship God on Sundays is of first importance and should take priority over other Sunday activities whenever possible, but there are other opportunities in the week, and when we can't make it in person, we can connect online.</p> <p>Question 2: Why is it important to worship God with others?</p> <p>3. Communion (“... the breaking of bread”).</p> <p>Reading: 1 Corinthians 11 verse 23-26.</p> <p>Comment: In case we forget that it cost Jesus His life to save us, by dying on a wooden cross, Jesus gave instructions to copy what He did at His last supper when he gave bread and wine to His disciples. The bread represents His crucified body and the wine represents His shed blood.</p> <p>Question 3: In what ways does Communion suggest the following?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The death of Jesus. Christ's return. The body of Christ. The blood of Christ. <p>Question 4: Communion is sometime called <i>the eucharist</i>, from the Greek for ‘thanksgiving’. Why do you think it is called this?</p> <p>4. Prayer.</p> <p>Reading: Ephesians 6 verse 18.</p> <p>Comment: In the previous session we saw that when we are born again we become God's children (John 1 verse 12). What could be more natural than children should speak to their father – in this case, to our Heavenly Father?</p> <p>Keeping in touch with our Father (either directly or speaking to Jesus) should be something we do every day as individuals – indeed several times a day as needs and opportunities arise. But there is something special about praying with other Christians. When we say “amen” at the end of corporate prayers, we are using a Greek word of Hebrew origin, meaning “so be it”, and it signifies “I agree with what has just been said”.</p>	
Explore and apply	
<p>Explore Exercise: Which of the following are true?</p>	

- a) The New Testament was written by Jesus.
- b) The authors of the Bible had all been close companions of Jesus.
- c) An important way of learning how to follow Jesus is reading the Bible.
- d) "Fellowship" describes Christians meeting together.
- e) Worship is one reason for Christians to meet together.
- f) Worship is the only valid reason for Christians to meet together.
- g) Communion represents the death of Jesus on the cross.
- h) The practice of Communion was invented by the Pope.
- i) Christians should only pray when together with others.
- j) Christians can pray wherever they are.

Discussion: What other things is it desirable for Christians to do together?

Apply:

How can I arrange my life around these four basic Christian activities (Bible reading, Fellowship, Communion and Prayer.)?

Reflect and review

Personal reflection: what is fantastic about the way that I am living now? Is there anything that I can change, any habits I can add, to become more like Jesus?

Suggested activity: take some time during the week to read your Bible, or study a bit deeper if you already regularly do this. Share something you read next session when we come back!