



THE CHURCH WAS BORN FOR THIS

#2 When You Have Jesus in Common, You Have Everything in Common

Acts 1:8; 10:1-48

Another reason why the church exists is to unite people in Christ.
How does the church unite people?

- It reminds us that we all belong to the _____ race
(Genesis 1:31; Acts 17:26)
- It helps us remove _____ and prejudice
(Acts 10:9-16)
Acts 10:28-29; Acts 10:34-35
- It helps us regard people from _____ point of view (Acts 1:8)
Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47
- It restores Jesus' standard of _____ (John 13:34-35)
Matthew 23:23
- It teaches us that God can use _____ to reach anyone (Revelation 7:9)
Matthew 19:26

You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth – Acts 1:8



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By Tim Wallingford

Throughout the New Testament we see Jesus and the apostles preaching to crowds, with people making decisions to follow Jesus. Scripture however highlights their interactions with individuals in the local neighborhoods, small groups, and personal encounters along the way.

Interestingly, there seems to be only one reference in the New Testament to evangelism taking place during a church service (1 Corinthians 14:24-25). Most evangelistic encounters in the New Testament occurred outside the synagogue/church service by way of personal relationships. Some examples of this include all the apostles, Nicodemus, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Zacchaeus, Simon, the Ethiopian, the jailor, Cornelius, Saul of Tarsus, Lydia, Apollos, Simon the Tanner, Timothy, Titus and many more.

The gospel of John described Jesus' life and ministry this way: "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14, *The Message*). So, where did Jesus live? Where did Jesus work? In the neighborhood. He met the neighbors, learned their names, heard their needs, ate with them, and ministered to them individually. Jesus was a friend to sinners (Matthew 11:19). He went into Peter's house and healed his mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14). Jesus had dinner at Levi's house where he met tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 9:10), Jesus went into a synagogue leader's home and raised his daughter from the dead (Matthew 9:23).

Jesus went through towns, villages, and synagogues getting to know the neighbors (Matthew 9:35). He healed individuals of sickness and proclaimed the good news of his kingdom (Matthew 9:35). Living in the neighborhood, Jesus saw and heard the brokenness. The people were like sheep without a shepherd, "harassed and helpless" (Matthew 9:36). The Greek words are revealing. *Harassed* carries the idea of flaying a fish. Life had sliced and diced the people's hearts, dreams, and families. The word for *helpless* shows a people defeated, lying prostrate on the ground with life's foot pressing their face into the dirt. It was then Jesus proclaimed to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37-38).

Do you see how Jesus lived? He loved his neighbors strategically to bring them to salvation. He wasn't afraid or repulsed by people's depraved spiritual conditions or obnoxious habits. He loved the neighborhood so much he died to fix it (John 3:16).