

# Metamorphosis

## Discussion Notes 4



### JUST FOR FUN - SOME RIDICULOUSLY DEEP QUOTES

Real Friendship has the remarkable possibility of growing our souls. The human spirit shrinks in isolation. I think that is why God made us for friendships with one another. Disciples of Jesus look for spiritual growth as a natural consequence of real friendship.  
- Michael Foss

The believer... yearns for the physical presence of other Christians. Humans are created a body, the Son of God appeared on earth in the body, he was raised in the body, in the sacrament the believer receives the Lord Christ in the body, and the resurrection of the dead will bring about the perfected fellowship of God's spiritual-physical creatures. The believer therefore praises God for the presence of a brother. The prisoner, the sick person, the Christian in exile sees in the companionship of a friend the gracious presence of God.  
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together

When we hear the names, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, we sense that in the mystery of God there must be a wondrous community. It is only from the perspective of the trinitarian God that we can claim that "God is Love," because love is never alone. Instead, it brings together those who are separate while maintaining their distinct characters... The trinitarian unity of the Son and the Father through the Spirit is a model for the relationships of men and women in the Spirit of Christ. The unity of the Church resides neither in the monarchy of God, nor in God as a supreme, divine essence, but in the trinitarian communion of God. However, this trinitarian community is so wide and so open that the Church and the whole world can "live" within it. The prayer of Jesus that "you may be one in us" is a prayer that is answered. Whether we know it or not we not only believe in the triune God, but also "live" in the triune God.  
- Jürgen Moltmann

# GROUP INTRO

This group discussion takes off from the sermon! To hear it go to [www.ichurch.net.au](http://www.ichurch.net.au)

You are on week four of a six-week journey. Please turn off your phones and look each other in the face at some point. You might start with one or two of these questions:

- *If you were a spy what would your codename be?*
- *What is your biggest pet peeve (the thing that you love to hate)?*
- *When you were a small child what was your most prized possession?*

## FOUR KINDS OF FRIENDSHIP?

The ancient philosopher Socrates (470-399BC) explored different kinds of friendship. We have expanded what he said a bit here with a more modern version which distinguishes four kinds.

**Friendship of similarity:** Alike, cool, black, white, safe, shallow, lasts while you conform.

**Friendship of usefulness:** Each benefits the other. It works for both. Lasts until not useful!

**Friendship of pleasure:** Enjoyable, fun, mates, social, common interests, makes you feel good.

**Friendship of the good:** Purposeful commitment to improve and grow good in each other.

- *How do you feel about these four kinds of friendship?*
- *What happens when we confuse the nature of a friendship?*
- *How do real friendships transform us?*

## KOINONIA: A TRULY TRANSFORMATIVE GIFT

We have been exploring *metamorphosis* - how God the Holy Spirit grows us, deepens us, and transforms us to be like our Saviour Jesus! One of the key ways this happens is in community. And the Bible describes the kind of community this happens in with a special word...

*Koinonia* is a gift that is deeper than friendship. It is sometimes translated: *friendship, communion, participation, common life, offering, contribution* and most often *fellowship*. But the word 'fellowship' has become so misused by modern people it may have lost its meaning.

I studied every occurrence of *koinonia* in the New Testament. The best translation seems to be something like *deep-sharing*. In every Bible verse, whenever this word occurs I have put *deep-sharing!* Survey the seven kinds of *koinonia* then discuss...

## 1. SHARED LIFE OF JESUS

1 Corinthians 1:9. God is faithful, who has called you into **deep-sharing** with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is the **deep-sharing** of the blood of Christ. The bread which we break, is the **deep-sharing** of the body of Christ.

## 2. SHARED JOURNEY

Acts 2:42. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to **deep-sharing**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer

1 John 1:3a. That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have **deep-sharing** with us...

## 3. SHARED SUFFERING

Philippians 3:10-11. I want to know Christ - yes, to know the power of his resurrection and **deep-sharing** in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death... somehow receiving the resurrection from the dead.

## 4. SHARED WEALTH

Romans 15:26. For (the churches of) Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a **deep-sharing** for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 8:4 ...the privilege of **deep-sharing** in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.

## 5. SHARED REJECTION OF LIES, DARKNESS, AND EGO

1 John 1:6. If we claim to have **deep-sharing** with God but walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth.

1 Corinthians 10:20-21. The sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to have **deep-sharing** with demons.

2 Corinthians 6:14. What **deep-sharing** can light have with darkness?

## 6. SHARED HOLY SPIRIT

Philippians 2:1-2. So if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any **deep-sharing** in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love...

2 Corinthians 13:14. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **deep-sharing** of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

## 7. SHARED FUTURE

Jude 3. I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we **deep-share**.

Romans 8:17. Now if we are God's children, then we are heirs, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, as we share in his sufferings we will also share in his glory.

Discuss the seven kinds of koinonia (deep-sharing):

- *Which of these is meaningful to you at the moment?*
- *Which of these needs exploring or explaining?*
- *Which of these do Aussie Christians forget?*
- *What do you want to say about them?*

## **THE DEEPEST SHARING IN THE UNIVERSE**

If you want to understand how real community works then a great place to turn is the Athanasian Creed. This creed from 1600 years ago attempts to explain the Trinity. Every statement about God's nature in this creed is also about healthy community. Underneath the surface, this creed is actually telling us how deep-sharing community works. Quietly reflect on these three deep statements from this creed...

**We worship one God in trinity and the trinity in unity,  
neither blending their persons  
nor dividing their essence.**

**What the Father has, the Son has, and the Holy Spirit has.**

**Nothing in this Trinity is before or after,  
nothing is greater or smaller;  
in their entirety the three persons  
are coeternal and coequal with each other.**

- *Which is your favourite?*
- *What have you noticed about God in these?*
- *What does each have to say about real deep-sharing community?*

### **“GRACESPACE”**

**This Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup> 7.30am To 12.00pm  
At the new Immanuel College Environmental Centre  
Starts with breakfast (cost \$15).**

**Grow in prayer, hear God's voice, reflect on the resurrection story.**