

Neighborhood Communion Group
Discussion Questions
The Church, part 2

Background

The idea of neighborhood communion groups arose from the earliest Christian communities that gathered regularly in homes for a time of eating and talking, something often missing in our busy lives. As you gather with friends, think of it as a throwback to the early church, or a dinner party in our day. Below, you'll find a Scripture passage, along with some suggested questions. Neighborhood Communion is a chance to enjoy food as well as food for thought.

Scripture Passage

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses."

Discussion

At other points in 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul talks about members of the church being like different body parts that need each other. In this passage, something similar is at work, but using the metaphor of spiritual gifts.

- 1) Paul clearly denotes how the variety of gifts is contrasted with all coming from the same Spirit, implying differences each of us brings but "for the common good." What image comes to mind when you think about working toward a common good in our own congregation and our own city?
- 2) Scholars think of Paul's list as representative, not exhaustive. Most of the ones here are spectacular, whereas in other NT passages more mundane things like serving and teaching are listed. How would you identify your own spiritual gift? What is one thing you are really good at and passionate about that can be used in service of God?
- 3) The next chapter in 1 Corinthians is sometimes called the "love passage," something read at weddings. Unfortunately, Paul's call to love is present because the church became divided, quarreling and such. Can you see how even different kinds of gifts and abilities within a church can lead to divisions? How does a church practice its love for each other and the world without becoming petty?