

CAFÉ CHURCH SERMON SERIES

STUDY GUIDE

Theme: What is Communion of Saints?

Bible Readings: *1Cor 1 v 1-3, 1John4 v7-12, Apostle's Creed.*

plus Eph2 v 19-22, 2Tim1 v 8-9, Phil 3 v 14 and Eph3 v 14-21

Reflection:

It's not often that just before you are about to preach, the worship song we are singing sums up the subject so clearly.

"Every soul You've saved sings out, Everything You've made resounds.
All creation's standing now Lifting up Your name;
We're joining in the angel's song We're gathered to Your ancient throne
Children in our Father's arms Shouting out Your praise"
(Adoration by Benton Brown)

The song references "every soul You've saved" joining together in worship and praise. The worship of heaven that never stops; never-ending and ceaseless praise; "joining with the angel's song, we're gathered to your ancient throne".

Having researched the subject of communion of saints, there is much difference, within the wider church as to what this statement of belief in the Apostle's Creed actually refers to. It is potentially one of the areas where within the Church of England we can find these differences of opinion and theology. Mike Moynagh described the evolution of church as "2000 years of disagreement". "It's not that you disagree, that's the issue; it's what you do when you disagree" he continues.

Lifeshapes, which is a good resource based out of St Thomas Crookes in Sheffield, describes church as 3 relationships, "Up", "In" and "Out", with its emphasis on God, fellowship and mission respectively. And to this relational model of church, we add a fourth relationship, "Of". This refers to the wider church both in Woodbridge, across the nation, indeed across the world, as we all worship and have relationship with almighty God through the redeeming grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The connectedness of body life runs much deeper than fellowship and friendship and the interdependency outlined by Paul in the writings to the Corinthians shows us the need we have for each other. The intimacy of the relationship God desires with us, is echoed in the way we relate to each other as we join in communion with Him. This communion transcends borders, denominations (praise God) and also has a timelessness to it. We end up joined to all Christians who have been, who are and who will be, through our connectedness with Jesus, who is the head of the body.

Questions?

1. What did you think "Communion of Saints" was before?
2. How does 1John4 v7-12 compare with 1Cor 13 ?
3. What is Paul saying in Eph 2 v 19-22 about our status now in Christ? and what is a continuing work?

Personal Application

Have a read of Ephesians 3 v 14-21; what would it mean to us to receive the blessings Paul is praying for?

