

Fostering an Environment for Participation Pt 2

Kirk Martin - Nov 27, 2011

The idea of an environment for participation comes from Acts 2:42-47

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship [participation], to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The Body of Christ - "From Many - ONE"

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

For those who for some reason don't feel included

1 Corinthians 12:14-16 Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

For those who don't feel their contribution is that important

1 Corinthians 12:17-20 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

For those who feel their part is all that matters and nothing else is needed

1 Corinthians 12:21-27 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

Truths That Foster An Environment for Participation

1 Peter 4:7 -11 Last week we talked about the context surrounding "each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others"

- [The urgency of the day] The end of all things is near.
- [The necessity of prayer] Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.
- [The environment of love] 8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.
- [The love for strangers] 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.
- [The call to faithfulness] 10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
- [The dependence upon God] 11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides,
- [All for the glory of God] so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Each of us has been placed in the body of Christ, and has a unique role/function

- 1 Corinthians 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.
- 1 Corinthians 12:11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.
- 1 Corinthians 12:18 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.
- 1 Corinthians 12:27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

The Lord has a purpose for our life

Jeremiah 1:5-10 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” 6 “Ah, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.” 7 But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. 9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

The Lord has works prepared in advance for us to do

Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We must focus on the equipping nature of the five-fold ministry

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Going forward I think these are some of the things that can help us

- Continue to strengthen and build strong foundations - grow to maturity
- Raise up leadership - 5-fold, elders, deacons, small group, heads of ministries
- Convey an environment for participation - an entrepreneurial spirit
- Commit ourselves to the four elements the early church had
 - a. Apostles Doctrine
 - b. Fellowship - *participation*
 - c. Breaking Bread
 - d. Prayer
- A greater emphasis on small groups - of various kinds - can be a great vehicle for carrying out the 4 elements
 - a. Teaching groups
 - b. Participation “fellowship” groups (ie mission trips)
 - c. Breaking Bread - eating together
 - d. Prayer