

## DISCIPLES—4 BREAK BREAD

In the year 2001, there was a house in Chicago. It was run down, weeds everywhere, apparently abandoned. Well, the house finally came up for auction because of back taxes. Someone bought the house. They went into it to clean it up, and what they found was horrifying. Instead of just finding an old run-down house, they actually found a man named Adolph Stick, who had apparently died of natural causes, sitting alone in his reading chair, and right next to Adolph Stick was a newspaper. In the year 2001, he was sitting next to a newspaper dated 1997. Apparently, this man had been dead for four years, and no one even noticed, not a neighbor, not a relative, not a friend. How does someone die and no one notices?

We in the American culture we want to be WOW'D! Preach to something new, we've heard all the old stuff!

As disciples of Jesus, rather than focusing on new information, maybe we need to focus on living the information that we already know. For example, one time a Pharisee asked Jesus, "What's the most important commandment of all?" You see there were 1,613 commands. That's a lot of commands. Jesus took these 1,613 and He narrowed it down to an absolute focus.

*Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22:37-39*

Maybe instead of seeking new information, we should live out the information Jesus has already shown us. Love. Love God and love your neighbor, because when you boil it all down to the main thought, it's all about relationships. **Living Life Together!**

Open up to Acts 2 as we continue our study called Disciples. Today, I want to talk to you about the relational aspect of being a disciple, a follower of Jesus, and as we do so, let's review the ground that we have traveled in the last few weeks.

Every Teaching Point Is categorized as **"RELATIONAL"**

So if you will let drive home a key thought for us today!

- **A DISCIPLE OF JESUS BREAKS BREAD.**

*Every day (the disciples) continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes... Acts 2:46*

Two different places... Temple Courts & In the Homes.

A Christ follower breaks bread doing life with other disciples.

Disciples met together very, very regularly, and fellowship, doing life together, was very important to them.

In fact, the meals are not like meals today.

Not only do we, as Christians, rarely eat with our neighbors, but the truth is, for a lot of us, we don't even eat with our families. The meals in the New Testament, they were much more like Thanksgiving meals, where people gathered together way early, and there would be several rounds of food and they would stay late. There was a relational aspect to these meals. People were doing life together. This was a high priority to them.

## BREAKING BREAD

### 1) DEMANDS EXTREME COMMITMENT.

In Acts 2, what just happened, Peter had just preached about the resurrection of Jesus and 3,000 people on one day surrendered their lives to Christ. They were baptized. Here was the New Testament church just being birthed.

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

**In GREEK: fellowship: *koinonia* (koy-nohn-ee'-ah); to share, to participate in a common cause, to engage in social intercourse. Don't let your mind drift to a sexual context. A relational nakedness!**

It is doing life at such a personal level with fellow believers that they become like family to you. They are necessary for your spiritual and relational survival.

You've heard me talking about the new direction that we are going to be going with our small groups.

As I have led small groups, they've become family to us!

We talk about things that I never dreamed of talking about with people who are not in my bloodline. I mean, we talk about the very real, street level stuff. When one of us hurts, we all hurt. We cry together. There's more tears shed in that group than I shed any other place. We laugh together. We celebrate.

I pray daily for some of the needs in our group. We break bread. This isn't accidental. It is intentional, and it is Biblical community.

How can so many people say, "I'm too busy" for what Jesus said was most important?

**Christians enjoy a personal relationship with Jesus.**

When I think of a Christian and a relationship with Jesus, what I think of personally is, I think of a Christian enjoying a personal relationship with Jesus, which is essential, because honestly, no one else can have a relationship with Jesus for you.

It has to be personal, but a relationship with Jesus was never intended to be private. There's a profound difference.

**Disciples enjoy a shared relationship with Jesus.**

When I think of disciples, instead of a personal relationship, I think of those who have a shared relationship with Jesus. Those who are enjoying and experiencing His power and His reality with other Christ Followers.

*Jesus Said... "...For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."* Matthew 18:20

There is something profoundly powerful about His presence when we come together participating in the family of Christ.

So, the question I would ask is this, "Why doesn't that kind of intimate relationship happen so often today?"

Be honest. Love your neighbor as yourself. The majority of us don't even know the names of many of our neighbors.

Not only are we not breaking bread, regularly doing life together, intimately with other Christ Followers.

Why is it, when Jesus said to love your neighbors, we don't even know our neighbors. The problem, my friends, all boils down to the air conditioner. Think about it. Go back in time before there was the air conditioner, where did people hang out? They would hang out on the front porch. Right? "Hey, neighbor!" With the air conditioner, people went inside. Add to it the attached garage. Before there was an attached garage, what would people do? They would drive into their detached garage and have to get out and walk. Now, with the attached garage, they can pull right in. Add to it the garage door opener, ziiiipppp brrrrr, pull in the back cave, shut it down before you have to see anybody. Huh? Then add to it the gated neighborhood so we can actually gate people out. The fenced in back yard so we can play without having to see those crazy, weird neighbors. My personal favorite way to avoid people was the answering machine. Beep ... "Craig, are you there? If you're there, pick up." "I'm not picking up your call." [laughter] Right? And then, there's caller ID. Cell phone rings. Think about the way technology has influenced our, taken us away from relationships. You go to the bank, you don't have to talk to anybody. You can go to the ATM machine. Shopping, I don't do it. You will rarely ever see me at a mall, unless I'm going to a movie trying to sneak in and sneak out. I do all of my shopping online. Movies, they're delivered to my mailbox with no late fees,

All these ways to avoid people, avoid relationships, when Jesus said out of 1,613 commands, let's boil it all down to this. You are to know God and love Him personally and reflect His love, loving your neighbor as yourself.

And yet, most people today say they don't have time.

Here's a word search I did on the words "one another"

<i><u>Love</u> one another...</i>	John 13:34
<i><u>Be devoted</u> to one another...</i>	Rom. 12:10a
<i><u>Honor</u> one another...</i>	Rom. 12:10b
<i><u>Accept</u> one another...</i>	Rom 15:7
<i><u>Serve</u> one another in love.</i>	Gal 5:13
<i><u>Be compassionate</u> to one another...</i>	Eph 4:32
<i><u>Submit</u> to one another...</i>	Eph 5:21
<i><u>Encourage</u> one another...</i>	1 Thess 5:11
<i><u>Spur</u> one another on toward love...</i>	Heb 10:24
<i><u>Live in harmony</u> with one another...</i>	1 Peter 3:8
<i><u>Offer hospitality</u> to one another...</i>	1 Peter 4:9

We are told to do all these loving things to one another and yet, right now at this moment, you can be sitting in a worship experience with people all around you relational empty and lonely.

You can be married, laying in bed next to your spouse and be lonely, because we have ignored the heartbeat of God, and that is relationships.

That's why He created you, because He is love and He needed someone to love. You are the object of His affection, and He wants you to share that love with other people ... and we're too busy!

Extreme commitment, hear me clearly, it is a commitment. **People Are REAL Characters!**

## 2) PRODUCES EXTREME RESULTS.

*Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. Acts 2:43*

**awe: phobos (fob'-os); alarm, fright, fear, terror.**

*All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Acts 2:44-45*

Do you realize, right now as you sit in these chairs, virtually every need that you or the person sitting around you, in front of you, or beside you has, could be met by God through His people immediately, if we functioned like the family of Christ is supposed to.

Let's say there is someone who is a hundred dollars shy on making their rent and they are about to get kicked out. Is there anyone who without even knowing the details would cut somebody a hundred dollar check just to help out? Who would do that? Who would do that? Would you really? Awesome! Because somebody probably has that need right now.

A widow with no family around, living in bad conditions in her home, who would go and give a day to help out? How many widows do you think have that need, perhaps living three doors down from you today?

A meal? Who'd make a meal for somebody in need?

Someone's car is breaking down and you'd try to work on it. You'd try to work on it. You'd try to help them out, no charge.

How about this? You've got a car and you might just, instead of trading it in, you might be so radical that you might just give it away to someone who's in need. Who might do that? Leave your hands up. There are people around that might want to get down your name and address right now.

So, here's what someone said, "Pastor Donnie, that's so powerful. Oh, my gosh. Let's make a bulletin board outside in the lobby. We can see what needs people have. We can see where we must do a bulletin board and this will be great."

Oh, yeah, and what will that do? That will keep you from having to break bread with anybody. That will insure that you don't have to really get to know somebody. It's the chicken, easy way out.

Disciples of Jesus break bread. You might say, "Well, I don't really have anything like that to give." You've got your heart. You've got your ear. You've got time. You've got your ability to pray.

Do you know that there are people that have need, even inside our fellowship? Many of don't even know because we've not cared to know. We've not broken bread with them to even know where they are at!

*Acts 2:46-47 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

What would happen if you were so committed to loving people God's way that non-believers looked at you and said, "I don't know about your belief, but your love is so real, I want to find out more about the God that is behind your love."

What will get their attention? When we live what Jesus told us to live and that is to love.

*"...Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35*

You cannot love one another unless you commit to do life together. A disciple of Jesus breaks bread.

There are those of you who are believers and you recognize you have a personal relationship with Jesus, but you don't have a deep committed shared relationship with Jesus.

At our church, the best place to experience this will always be our Friendship First Groups.

I invite you to intentionally step into Biblical community. I believe so much in doing life with other believers, that we are changing the way we do our small groups. You don't have a small group yet? You know you need it.

It's not going to happen accidentally. You must commit to it. Extreme commitment. There is nothing more important than these relationships.

Don't do life alone.