

## Christian Community – Sharing our Abundances

A common subject amongst Christians, perhaps we know it all too well. Identifying our *abundances* is perhaps difficult. Sharing an abundance can also be extremely difficult, so hopefully we can gain courage to not only identify our own abundances and share them, but also help other fellow Christian brethren do the same!

### What is community?

Merriem-Webster On-line Dictionary – “**1** : a unified body of individuals: as **a** : STATE, COMMONWEALTH **b** : the people with common interests living in a particular area; *broadly* : the area itself <the problems of a large *community*> **c** : an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location **d** : a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society <a *community* of retired persons> **e** : a group linked by a common policy **f** : a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests <the international *community*> **g** : a body of persons of common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society <the academic *community*>”

-- From how you understand a community of Christians, which definition of community do they fulfill?

### What type of community won't last?

Matt 12:25 – “And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” (Similar verses: Mark 3:24-25, Luke 11:17)

Robert M. Hutchins – A world community can exist only with world communication, which means something more than extensive shortwave facilities scattered about the globe. It means common understanding, a common tradition, common ideas, and common ideals.

-- Is it possible for Christians to be a part of communities that are opposed to Christianity?

### What does a Christian community look like?

Acts 2:44-47 – “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

1 Cor 12:11-26 – “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. For your comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

1 Peter 2:9-17 – “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstained from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may be *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.”

-- How do Christians relate to the world around them? Do they seek to keep it the same, or make a difference?

### **What is abundance?**

Merriem-Webster On-line Dictionary – “**1** : an ample quantity : PROFUSION  
**2** : AFFLUENCE, WEALTH”

Luke 12:15 – “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought

forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build reater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry.”

Mark 12:41 – “And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.”

### **What do abundances look like?**

- 1) What examples of abundances do you see in the world? Make a list.
- 2) What examples of abundances do you see yourself as having? Make a list.
- 3) Name one abundance per person in the group that you've noticed. Write yours down.

### **Are skills needed to properly make use of abundances?**

Matt 25:14-30 – “For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man traveling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents. And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. ... Then he which had received the one talent and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine. His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

### **Consider the servant given one talent.**

- 1) Why might he have been afraid of using his talent?

- 2) What did the master tell the servant he *should have* done with his talent?
- 3) Do you think that the servant may not have had the skill to duplicate the talent on his own, but could have given it to someone with that ability and still made another talent? Look at your list of abundances and consider which ones you are most skilled at using and those you need someone else to help you use.

### **Do we need to share our abundances?**

2 Cor 8:9-15 – “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. And herein I give *my* advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. Now therefore perform the doing *of it*; that as *there was* a readiness to will, so *there may be* a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that a man hath, *and* not according to that he hath not. For *I mean* not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may be a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may be *a supply* for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that *had gathered* much had nothing over; and he that *had gathered* little had no lack.”

1 John 3:16-17 – “Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

James 2:15-16 – “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?”

### **How do community and personal abundances come together?**

**Consider those things we have that were put together by many people.**

- 1) Would we have bread if the wheat grower and miller didn’t share it with the baker?  
What if we had wheat but no bakers? Bakers but no wheat?
- 2) How do your list of abundances compare to this? Is one like the wheat and talents so that it needs to be given to be made useful? Is it like the baker which needs to receive another abundance to be made useful? Is it like the miller who is somewhere in between?
- 3) If a community doesn’t share its abundances, how well does it perform? Can a community work well if everyone tries to do everything alone? Can you take advantage of what you have in excess without anyone else?

-- How do bodies of people see to act in similar ways to individual people, looking at 2 Cor 8:9-15?