

## Doing Good & Sharing

Hebrews 13:16 (NASB)

**“And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”**

The need to belong is one of the most fundamental emotional and spiritual needs each and every person will ever feel. We can look around and observe people going to extreme lengths in order to belong to the group they prefer. Many of us will choose our friends, clothes, cars, hobbies, neighborhoods, schools, churches, civic organization, and even our boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse because we want to belong to one group or another.

The consequences of not belonging to any group can be dire. Prosperity, emotional health, and even life can depend on it. Many people who commit suicide or engage in self-harm do so out of a sense of isolation, because they may feel that they don't belong anywhere or to anyone.

The command of Hebrews 13:16 calls us back to the heart of what it means to be a Christian community. If believers in Christ are together called to identify with the shame and reproach of Christ that places them outside of the dominant religious system, then to what group of people are they called to belong? The faithful Christians of Hebrews had been commended for giving up everything for the sake of the Gospel of grace. What would replace their previous identity and sense of belonging?

- Do you ever feel isolated and alone?
- How does this feeling rank among the things you would not like to experience in life?

The call to die to yourself, give up everything and follow Jesus is not bad news that leads to isolation. It is good news (literally)! Listen to the words of Jesus in John 14:18-21:

18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

First of all, every believer in Christ has the constant and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus is talking about. We have the real and literal presence of God. This is how we are able to know God, to love God, and to live good lives of consistent obedience to God. But we must never miss that our communion does not end with the triune God. Because we have the Spirit of God with us and in us, we also have communion (spiritual community) with one another (The Church)! Just as the Holy Spirit enables us internally to know, to love, and to

obey God, the Church externally enables us to do all of those things. This community with God and others forms the context for Hebrews 13:16.

## “Do not neglect doing good.”

The command to do good (eupoiia) is a very consistent one throughout the NT epistles. It seems both obvious and vague, but that is likely what the author wants us to think. Christians are to be known as the people who do good. The context of Hebrews gives this command extra weight. Even though the believers may have received evil from the world, they are commanded to respond by being constant in doing good.

What are some ideas of “doing good” that you believe God might be calling you to as an individual? A family? A life group? A church?

What are some of the most difficult situations you find to do good in?

How do the Holy Spirit and your community of Christians enable to do good in those situations?

## “And sharing”

The Greek word translated “sharing” is koinonia. You may already be familiar with that word. That word is often translated as having to do with fellowship or communion of saints. The King James Version follows the Latin Vulgate in translating the word as “communication,” which carries a different connotation today than it did 400 years ago. Sharing truly is the best way to think about koinonia in this context.

Communion is a very special way through ceremony that the church is supposed to demonstrate sharing rooted in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When folks in the Baptist tradition get together for one of those wonderful covered dish dinners, they like to say that they are fellowshiping, or practicing koinonia. Other churches have a tradition known as the “love feast,” which is an actual shared meal that accompanies communion. Many of your life groups make it a habit to share a meal with one another. These are exactly the types of things that the writer of Hebrews has in mind. When believers, following the tradition of the Acts 2 church, get together and share their food with one another they are obeying Hebrews 13:16 in a very practical way.

Sharing what you have is obviously not limited to sharing your food. Giving of your money, your time, your talents, your energy, your concern, and your relationships is all entailed in “giving what you have.” The cool thing about giving in, to, and through the church is that the effects of your sharing carry far beyond what you could have done with those resources on your own.

- What does the Lord’s Supper have to do with Hebrews 13:16?  
(Hint: Jesus’ completed sacrifice for sin means that praise and sharing with one another are the sacrifices that God now desires from us.)
- How has sharing with the church helped you to realize that you are not alone?

Discussion Guide: April 30, 2017

- Have you ever benefitted from other believers sharing with you?
- What are some practical behaviors that have helped you to give abundantly, regularly, and systematically?
- How do you feel you need to grow as a giver?