

# Authentic Fellowship

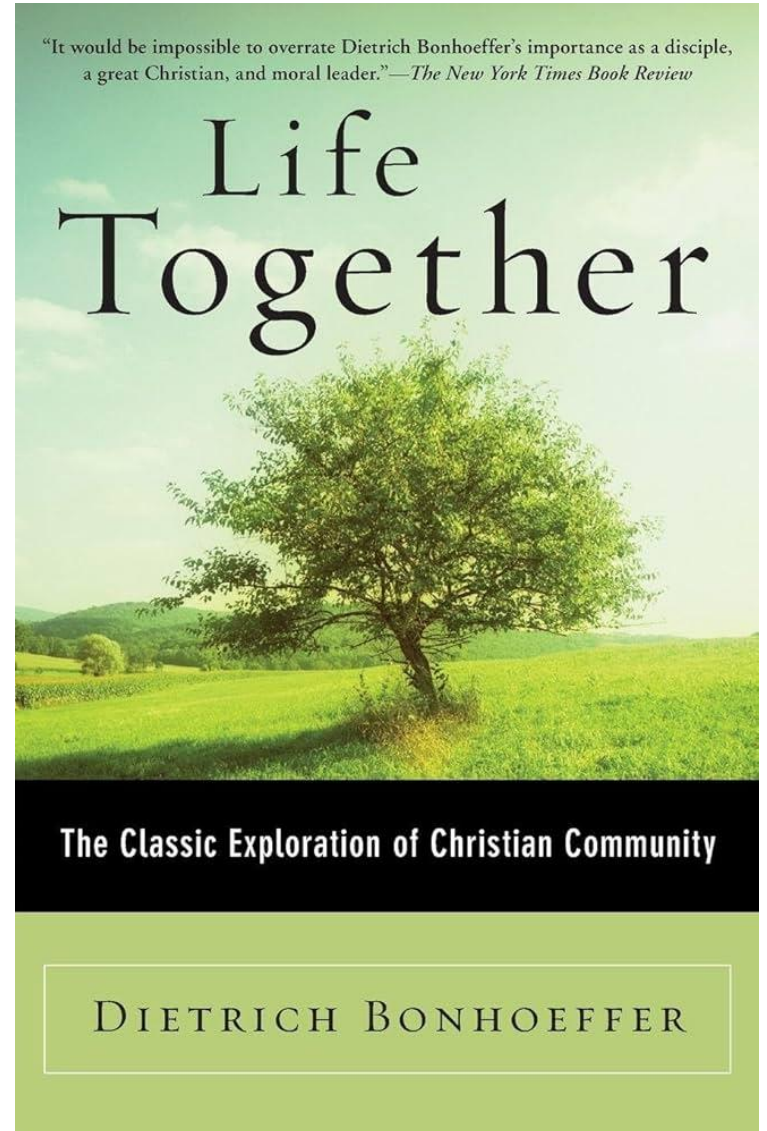
Experiencing Genuine Fellowship in the  
Body of Christ

# What is the Purpose for the Church?

- “It is easy to think that the Church has a lot of different objects— education, building, missions, holding services.... the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose” (CS Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

# Life Together

Throughout *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer defines the Church as the meeting grounds of Christianity. What should the church do when it meets? Bonhoeffer concludes that we are to live as the body of the Church, exercising our gifts to assist the body of believers and then working through that body to reach out to non-believers. Christians are established in unity by the saving work of Jesus Christ, and it matters not if they agree on the words to sing or what tempo to praise their Creator. He argues what is important is that they are lifting their voices up in unison.



# The Basis of Christian Fellowship



# The Basis of Christian Fellowship

- Fellowship is important and the term (koinonia or κοινωνία) means “a common life together”
- Our “commonness” is our faith in Jesus, not race, ethnicity, SES, education, gender, or age
- Fellowship involves being together, loving each other, and communing together
- It involves listening to someone who has a concern, visiting someone in a hospital, joining a small group fellowship, and praying with someone who has a need
- Do you open your life to others? Be committed to fellowship

# The Basis of Christian Fellowship

- <sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. <sup>9</sup> In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.



# Who is God? The Holy Trinity



# Distinct Persons Who Share Interdependent Love

- **The Father's Love:** The Father's love is characterized by his role as the un-originate **source** of the other two persons. His love is shown in that he “gave up his beloved Son” for the redemption of humanity
- **The Son's Love:** The Son's love is expressed in his **self-sacrifice**. Jesus was to do the will of the Father who sent him, demonstrating love and devotion. He also shows his love by sending the Holy Spirit to believers
- **The Holy Spirit's Love:** The Holy Spirit is described as the “love” that flows between the Father and the Son, the “**bond**” that unites them in perfect relationship. The Spirit's role is to pour the love of God into the hearts of believers, sharing the intimate Trinitarian love with creation



# Distinct Persons Who Share Interdependent Love

- Son is sent by the Father (Jn 14:24) and comes forth from him (16:28)
- “These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me” (Jn 14:24)
- Holy Spirit is given by the Father (14:16), sent by him (14:26), and proceeds from him (15:26)
- “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever” (Jn 14:16)
- “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (Jn 14:26)

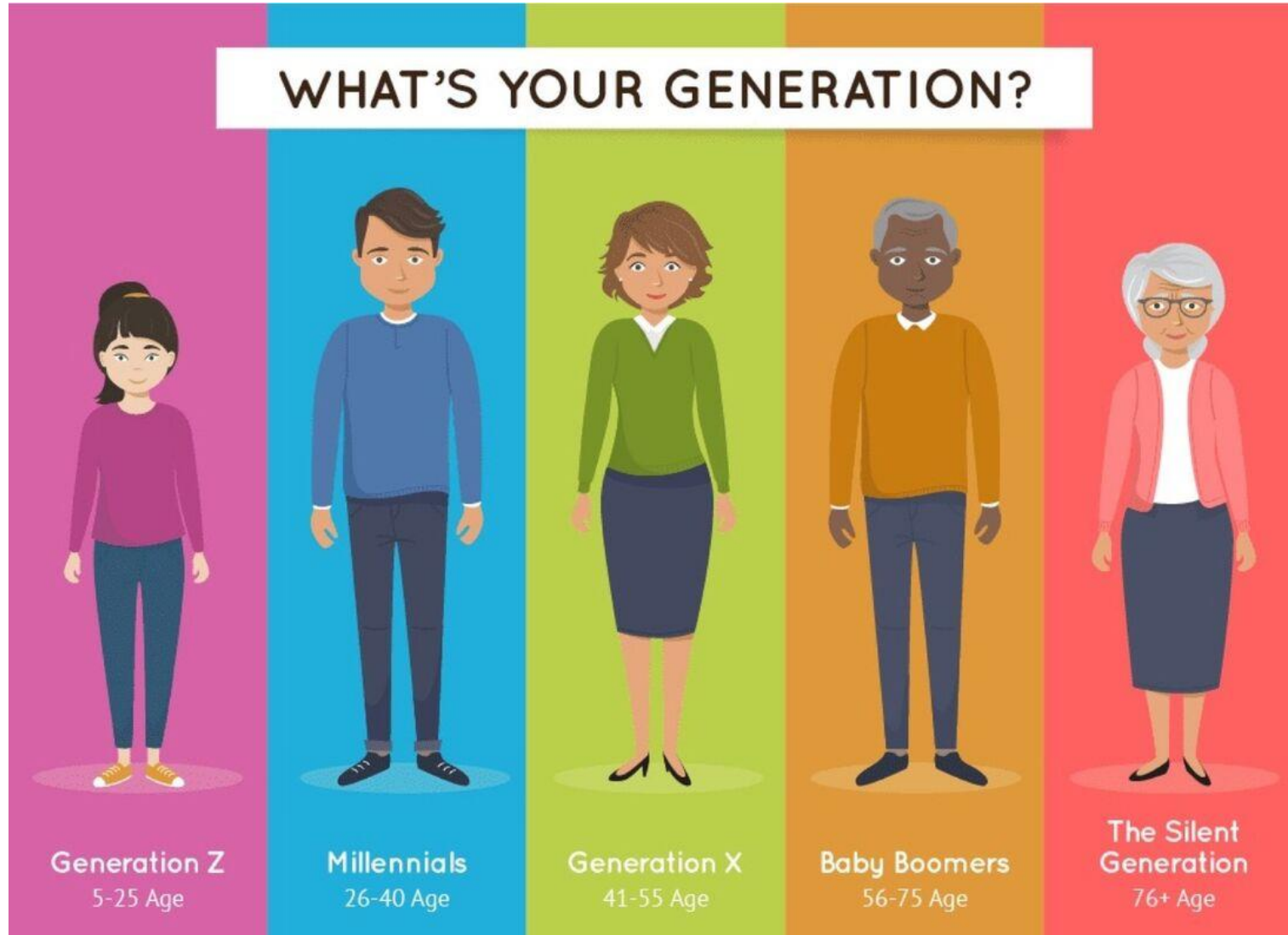
# Distinct Persons Who Share Interdependent Love

- Son prays for the coming of the HS (14:16); Father sends HS in Son's name (14:26); Son will send the HS from the Father (15:26)
- Son must go away before he can send the HS (16:7). HS will continue the ministry of the Son (14:26; 15:26)
- “But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you”(Jn 16:7)
- This eternal, dynamic, and selfless love within the Godhead is the source and model for all human love and community

# Practical Implications

- The inter-dependent relationship between members of the Triune God-head show us the following:
- The body of Christ is comprised of many members
- We are all inter-dependent, not independent of one another
- We are all ontologically equal but have different functioning roles
- When believers show love toward one another, we manifest God
- “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (Jn 13:35)

# Do You Know Your Generation?



# 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Generational Issues

- 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christians are leaving the church:
  - The church is hypocritical
  - The church is not relevant
  - The church hurt me
  - The church does not meet my expectations

# 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Generational Differences

- 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christians are brought up in an age of skepticism. They don't believe everything 1<sup>st</sup> generation people tell them, and tend to question our teachings more than previous generations
- 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christians may not experience 180 degree turns that 1<sup>st</sup> generation Christians experienced. Their growth, if any, tends to be small and takes a longer process
- 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Christians are more jaded because they see inconsistencies and struggles with their Christian parents and the church



# Bridging 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Generational Gaps

- Avoid just sharing spiritual victories or answered prayer. Share personal testimonies as one who is in the process of struggling in the Christian faith
- Avoid preaching or teaching Christianity as moralism—what the Bible says, how to apply it, then live it out
- Instead, share what the Bible says, how to apply it, why you can't do it, how Jesus can help you, then live it out

# Discipleship within the Body of Christ

- Pastoral care or shepherding for the flock
- “With Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we will rejoice at each other’s happiness and endeavor, with tenderness and sympathy, to bear each other’s burdens” (a church covenant)

# Discipleship within the Body of Christ

- Pastors and church leaders should not only care for the sheep ourselves, but consider how to equip the flock to care for one another
- <sup>11</sup> “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> 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” (Eph 4:11-13)
- Pastors and church leaders are called to build up the body of Christ, so members can build up one another

# Discipleship within the Body of Christ

- Pastors and church leaders are to shepherd God's flock
- The whole body of Christ needs one another
- We should all minister to one another
- Sometimes, it's a bit hard in Presbyterianism to make a strict distinction between teaching elders, ruling elders (non-serving elders), and deacons