



COFFEE & CONVERSATION

March 12, 2019



church (n.)

comes from the Old English cirice, circe "place of assemblage set aside for Christian worship; the body of Christian believers, Christians collectively; ecclesiastical authority or power," from Germanic Kirche, similar to Scottish Kirk).

This is probably borrowed via an Gothic word from Greek kyriake (oikia), kyriakon doma "the Lord's (house)," rooted in the Greek word from kyrios "ruler, lord," formed from the Greek root the keue- (kyeu) "to swell" ("swollen," hence "strong, powerful"). Greek kyriakon (adj.) "of the Lord" was used of houses of Christian worship since c.300, especially in the East, though it was less common in this sense than ekklesia or basilike. An example of the direct Greek-to-Germanic transmission of many Christian words, via the Goths; probably it was used by West Germanic people in their pre-Christian period.

ecclesiastic (adj.)

is then the word closer to the root of what "church" means. It comes from late 15c., from Middle French ecclésiastique and directly from Late Latin ecclesiasticus, from Greek ekklesiastikos "of the (ancient Athenian) assembly," in late Greek, "of the church," from ekklesiastes "speaker in an assembly or church, preacher," from ekkalein "to call out,"

The word is form of **ek** "out of" (like ex- in English) + **kalein** "to call" (**klesia**) literally meaning "those who are called out of..." This is the word used for "church" in the New Testament.

community (n.)

late 14c., "a number of people associated together by the fact of residence in the same locality," also "the common people" (not the rulers or the clergy), from Old French communauté "community, commonness, everybody" (Modern French communauté), from Latin communitatem (nominative communitas) "community, society, fellowship, friendly intercourse; courtesy, condescension, affability," from communis "common, public, general, shared by all or many"

Koinonia (n.)

is a transliterated form of the Greek word, κοινωνία, which means communion, joint participation; the share which one has in anything, participation, a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, etc. It identifies the idealized state of fellowship and unity that should exist within the Christian church, the Body of Christ. "Christian fellowship," 1865, Greek, literally "communion, fellowship," from koinos "common, ordinary".

Thinking about the words Church and community...

- How do you define the feeling or experience of community?
- Where/When/How have you most poignantly experienced a sense of community?

- How is the Church a community?
- What vocation does the Church have to be a community?
- Have/where/when you have experienced community in Church (not necessarily the building)?
- Have/where/when have you not experienced community in Church?

How do you react to these scriptures and sayings:

"I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."

— Mahatma Gandhi

"Churches are good for prayer, but so are garages and cars and mountains and showers and dance floors."

- Anne Lamott

"I'm here to be me, which is taking a great deal longer than I had hoped."

- Anne Lamott

"Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, there a church of God exists, even if it swarms with many faults."

- John Calvin

"We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass- grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... We need silence to be able to touch souls."

- Mother Teresa

"There is God. And then there is the church. The less we conflate the two, the better. The church may reject God's children, but God never does."

- Nadia Bolz-Weber

"My spirituality is most active, not in meditation, but in the moments when: I realize God may have gotten something beautiful done through me despite the fact that I am an asshole, and when I am confronted by the mercy of the gospel so much that I cannot hate my enemies, and when I am unable to judge the sin of someone else (which, let's be honest, I love to do) because my own crap is too much in the way, and when I have to bear witness to another human being's suffering despite my desire to be left alone, and when I am forgiven by someone even though I don't deserve it and my forgiver does this because he, too, is trapped by the gospel, and when traumatic things happen in the world and I have nowhere to place them or make sense of them but what I do have is a group of people who gather with me every week, people who will mourn and pray with me over the devastation of something like a school shooting, and when I end up changed by loving someone I'd never choose out of a catalog but whom God sends my way to teach me about God's love."

— Nadia Bolz-Weber, *Accidental Saints: Finding God in All the Wrong People*