

Re-imagining Life

Session 3: *Whole-Life Together*



'Men are from somewhere; women are from somewhere completely different.' Most of the time, half the population wonder what the other half are thinking but would be astonished if they knew. We are so different at times. Football statistics can really be that interesting! Considering the differences, it is amazing that we continue to be attracted to one another. Or maybe it isn't so surprising! Perhaps it is the mystery, the fact that men and women do complement each other. We fit together. We need each other.

The passage we are going to look at this time explains the origins of some many of these differences – the same and yet uniquely formed. Both were created with incredible care and inventiveness.

How we live together matters as we live together as whole-life Christians. We are sexual beings with all that that implies. We are created with strengths and weaknesses. We need each other to be whole. The big question is how the Church can demonstrate to the world that we are not afraid of the way we are created, that we do not need to dominate one another either through power or manipulation and that we do believe that we are stronger when we work together.

The quality of the time you spend together will be determined by the degree of honesty you manage to bring to the session. So, explore the questions, bring your own, listen well to each other, be careful with each other's feelings but think through what it means to be a community of whole-life disciples – some of whom come from 'that place' and some of whom come from 'somewhere completely different!' (Rumours of Mars and Venus may or may not be accurate!!!)

Genesis 2:20-25

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹ So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

²³ The man said,
"This is now bone of
my bones and
flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken
out of man."

²⁴ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Notice

As you read, notice these features:

The creation account relating to men and women has led to many different interpretations and applications. Much has been written and much has been said. We will concentrate on a few of the main issues that could be highlighted:

1. The one and only thing that God said was not good, was the concept of the man living in isolation. We are created for relationship.

2. Adam needed a human who would be different enough to complement his strengths but similar enough to share the same challenges

Reflect

How do you see the differences between the sexes?

How does the Bible encourage us to work together (1 Cor 11)?

Why do we need each other?

What does that mean for us in our church?

How do we help people who are married?

Does this passage help those who are not married? How?

What would/should/could a Christian man look like?

Why are there so few Christian men?

What would/should/could a Christian woman look like?



Word for the Week

Joint enterprise

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful... fill... and rule'. Genesis 1:27,28

I have a memory of a scene in some apocalyptic disaster movie with a couple wandering in a world undamaged but where nearly everyone else was dead. All the monuments of human achievement were there – the libraries full of books, the machinery silent. I have no idea what happened next but have sometimes wondered how they could get it all started up again. What skills and knowledge they would need. How many books they would have to read.

We do not often think about it, but everything around us has only come about with a multiplicity of gifts and enormous human co-operation. Think how many people take part in any enterprise, from the first designs, through hard manual labour to the final result, whether it's a diamond necklace, a supermarket or a zoo. Our first ancestors were blessed *together*, and over the millennia we have taken hold of the world God has given us. We have used the brains and inventiveness that he gave us. We have built civilisations and homes, constitutions and rain dances, nuclear power stations and symphony orchestras.

The goodness of God's good creation still shines through all that we have made, but so does the destructive corrupting power of evil, not least in the way we work together. Male and female together, as these verses emphasise, but also old and young together, black and white together, extrovert and introvert together. Too often we keep our ideas to ourselves. Guard our areas of work from others. Protect our skills from 'plagiarism'. Tell our triumphs, but keep the workings to ourselves. Construct hierarchies that hinder co-operation.

How can we restore some of that creative generous togetherness in the way we work? Who are you going to work *with* today?

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