

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION

PURPOSE AND SITUATION OF THE ROLLO

This is the third rollo of the third and last day of the Tres Dias. It follows the **Life in Grace** rollo and continues the process of preparing the candidate for faithful living during the **Fourth Day**, and to some extent, for re-entry back into the world following three days of living in the cloistered atmosphere of a Christian community.

The rollo is meant to encourage the candidates to begin thinking less about themselves and more about community. The rollista should describe how a Christian community nurtures and equips its people and discuss the formation, composition, and support of the Christian community. It is also helpful to set forth, to some limited extent, the mission of any individual community.

Further, the rollista should develop how the mission of any Christian community might be accomplished. The rollo might best indicate that the community can be a dynamic and purposeful instrument in performing Christ's work here on earth; in the life of the believer, in the church, and in the world.

It is suggested that the rollista deal realistically with some of the problems and shortcomings of living and working in community; also, he/she should discuss how some of these problems might be confronted and overcome.

Finally, the rollista is encouraged to give personal examples of how he/she has worked as a member of the Christian community to build teamwork and accomplish some specific aspect of the Lord's work. He/she might describe how the community determined the objective to be accomplished. Information would also be helpful regarding how they acted creatively to accomplish the objective, what pitfalls or obstacles were encountered along the way, how they worked in community to resolve these problems, and what were the final results.

While being careful not to discuss the material designated for the next rollo (**Reunion Groups**), this rollo does, nevertheless, establish the idea of working in community. However, the rollista should avoid talking in any significant detail about any projects or programs emanating from the small groups we know as **Reunion Groups**; leave that to the next rollista.

Time objective: Should not exceed **20** minutes.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION

OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION**
 - A. The Christian community nurtures its members**
 - B. The Christian community trains and equips its members**
 - C. The Christian community provides spiritual nourishment for itself**
- II. WHO IS THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY?**
 - A. Definition**
 - B. Many communities in the one Body of Christ**
 - C. Church based communities**
 - D. Other Christian communities**
- III. WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CALLED TO DO?**
 - A. Identify God's mission for the ministry**
 - B. Be committed to that mission**
 - C. Work together in a spirit of love**
 - D. Decide where and when to act**
- IV. HOW IS THE MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?**
 - A. Through the Body of Christ in action**
 - B. By taking stands on issues**
 - C. By dealing with disagreements openly, honestly, and with Christian love**
- V. CONCLUSION**
 - The Christian Community, with Christ as its Head, is always greater than the sum of its parts.**

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN ACTION

COMMENTARY ON THE OUTLINE

(This material is intended as a study aid for the Rollista. It is not intended to be the rollo.)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Christian community nurtures its members.** The Christian life in grace calls us as individuals to a life in piety, study, and action. It also calls us into community where our piety, study, and action will be encouraged and nurtured. However, unless shared with others, we have not accomplished anywhere near what our Lord and Savior desires and expects of us. From Ephesians 4:12,13, we learn that we are to prepare for works of service so that the Body of Christ (the church) may be built up, we might reach unity in the faith and become mature. In most situations, these works of service can best be accomplished through community; in fact, more often than not, they can only be accomplished through community.
- B. The Christian community trains and equips its members.** The Christian community has the responsibility to train and equip its members before sending them out for works of service (action). The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19, 20), commands us to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to obey everything Christ has commanded. Making disciples is not accomplished merely by selecting a warm body and a willing person; it requires working with these persons, encouraging them, teaching and training them, and disciplining them when necessary.
- C. The Christian community provides nourishment for itself.** We also learn that the Body of Christ has a ministry in and to the world. In 1 Peter 2:9 (NIV), we read that we are: *“a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”* We are commanded to declare (proclaim) the praises of God. The Christian community, therefore, focuses in upon itself for its own spiritual nourishment so as to enable it to then focus outward in work and witness to the world with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. It acts collectively, doing those things that individuals cannot accomplish by themselves.

II. WHO IS THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY?

- A. Definition:** The Christian community is made up of all Christians who have a vital, living union with Christ, who have come together to live their lives for Christ and who are engaged in the action of bringing others to know Christ through various ministries.
- B. Many communities in one Body of Christ.** There are many communities which make up the Body of Christ. The institutional church is but one of these communities. Christ declares that where two or more people gather together in His name, He is in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20). Christian community can be prayer

groups, study groups, service organizations, issue-based organizations, similar interest-based organizations, etc.

- C. Church based communities.** Among organizations which emanate from the institutional church are missionary groups, Bible study groups, youth groups, worship-dance groups, altar care guilds, Cursillo de Christiandad, Via de Cristo, Walk to Emmaus, and many others. If the rollista is a member of one of these or a similar organization, a (*very brief*) statement may be given about his/her involvement in it.
- D. Other Christian communities.** Among Christian communities, which do not emanate from the institutional church, are Tres Dias and Kairos Prison Ministries. Here, the rollista may want to say a few words (*be brief*), about being involved in Tres Dias or in a prison ministry. Other ministries are to unwed mothers, the Gideon's (Bible distribution), issue-oriented groups supporting Christian action, such as pro-life groups, ministries to those in terminal illness situations, etc. However, it is *imperative* that if you are involved in any issue-oriented groups (such as pro-life) which are current "hot-button" issues, you **CANNOT** use this rollo as a "soapbox" to promote your beliefs regarding the issue; that could be hurtful to a candidate. This is not the time or place for preaching on issues. Mention of your involvement, however, is both appropriate and adequate.

III. WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CALLED TO DO?

- A. Identify God's mission for the ministry.** When a new ministry is begun, it needs to be bathed in prayer to identify what is God's mission for the ministry. There should be clear consensus from those involved regarding God's plan for the ministry. Periodically, the mission may need to be re-examined to determine if it continues to adequately meet the needs of those to whom the ministry is directed. Seeking God's direction through prayer is the only way to assure the ministry is pleasing to Him and for it to be a continuing success.
- B. Be committed to that mission.** Once God's plan for a ministry is clear, those involved in the ministry need to be committed to seeing it through to its completion in order to accomplish God's plans. If it is a long-term project or a continuing ministry, a commitment for a reasonable length of time should be made. Commitment to ministry should be taken seriously. There often is a tendency for people to flutter in and out of various ministries (and even congregations). It is important for persons to be committed to the ministry and supportive of the leadership God has called to it.
- C. Work together in a spirit of love.** When accepting a call to a ministry, the Christian community needs to work together in a spirit of love. Encouraging those involved in the ministry, teaching and training them, and assisting new members to assimilate should be the normal pattern for those who have been in the ministry for a longer time. Demonstrating through actions that you care about your fellow servants in the ministry will come naturally as you study God's word. Through prayer, He will also reveal to you, persons in need of special attention and concern. Being considerate of the feelings of others and demonstrating Christian charity through your actions are

indicative of your love for your fellow workers and servants of God (Phil. 2:3-4). If appropriate, the rollista might want to make a declarative statement about how the Christian community demonstrated their Christian love to the rollista at a time when the rollista had a need.

- D. Decide when and where to act.** When building Christian community, as in most areas of life, deciding where and when to take action is critical. When making ministry decisions, consideration of costs and other practical issues are important. Regarding meeting in a Bible-study group, the decision of when to study a certain topic might be based upon some current topic in vogue with many people. For example, if a movie or book on Christian values or ethics has just been released, the time to begin a small group study is undoubtedly right now. The key is to look to God through prayer for discernment and guidance. Speaking to your pastor and/or other respected Christian leaders to confirm your inclinations would be appropriate.

IV. HOW IS THE MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?

- A. Through the Body of Christ in action.** Only through the Body of Christ in action can a Christian community accomplish their ministry effectively and with a clear witness. Can you imagine, for example, how a Christian weekend like Tres Dias could be conducted without a Christian community? Similarly, most mission projects would not likely be very successful if attempted alone. God has given gifts within the Christian community that are needed for the work and service of the church (1 Cor. 12).
- B. By taking stands on issues.** There comes a time when the Christian community needs to stand up and be counted on certain moral issues of the day. When Scripture is clear on an issue and God is definitely leading you and others to address the issue, listen to Him; seek His guidance regarding how to proceed, consider wise counsel from respected Christian leaders, make a stand on the issue, and take action. However, proceed with the assistance, support, and wisdom of other Christians. The rollista may want to make a brief statement on some issue where the Christian community took a stand. As indicated earlier, please be certain not to preach in the rollo regarding the issue.
- C. By dealing with disagreements openly, honestly, and in Christian love.** In every Christian community, disagreements will occasionally occur. Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement (Acts 15:36-41). When disagreements arise, it is important that the Christian community acknowledge their differences and bring them into the open. The issues need to be discussed honestly and with candor. The disagreements need to be dealt with in Christian love, being respectful of the views of others. The circle of discussion should be no larger than the circle of the offense. If the Christian community is unable to arrive at a peaceful solution, it is recommended they secure the assistance of a Christian counselor who is not involved with the disagreement.

V. CONCLUSION

- The Christian community, with Christ as its head, is always greater than the sum of its parts. One of the wisest men who ever lived (King Solomon) said, as

recorded in Ecc. 4:12 (NIV): “*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*”

This is the idea behind Christian community in action. There is strength in numbers, particularly if those numbers are filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Note to the rollista: *There is far more subject matter in this “**Commentary . . .**” than is required to meet the time objective of the rollo. While it is necessary to speak very briefly on each item listed in the outline, be careful to select for expansion, only those items for which you have something significant to contribute - - usually through personal experience. Remember, the more important part of the Weekend will occur during table discussions than what participants will learn or remember from hearing the rollo. The rollo is meant more to spark ideas for the table discussions than it is meant to be instructive.*

Time Objective: Not to exceed **20** minutes.

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BIBLE REFERENCES

(These Bible references are included here to help the rollista understand some of the biblical background of the rollo. The list is neither complete nor is it intended to become part of the rollo. Read the references and listen for the Word of God.)

Ephesians	4:12-13	Prepare for works of service
Matthew	28:19-20	Make disciples of all nations
I Peter	2:9	A people belonging to God
Phil.	2:3-4	Consideration for others
I Cor.	12	Spiritual gifts
Acts	15:36-41	Disagreements among Christians
Proverbs	20:3	It is to a man's honor to avoid strife
Psalms	133	How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity
Romans	12:4-8	One body with many members
Ecc.	4:12	Strength in numbers