

(Food for thought: Gospel Matthew
18: 15-20)

“Two or Three”



At the time that Matthew wrote his Gospel, the early church was on its own, no longer a part of the Jewish community and therefore no longer observing the daily norms and customs of that religious tradition. The community needed guidelines for its life together and in chapter 18 Matthew portrays Jesus as a community builder, instructing his disciples on matters that emphasize and focus on the community of believers.

Where do we find the true presence of Christ? In today's example, He is in our midst when we work together to right wrongs. Forgiveness and justice should characterize the community; if it does,

others will recognize something unique about the church and might even recognize Christ alive and active in our midst doing what others may believe impossible. Christians are not simply to live as individuals, but as members of a witnessing and supportive community.

In Matthew's Gospel, from the very beginning, Jesus is named "Emmanuel," "God is with us." The Gospel ends with the same assurance of his on-going presence. When Jesus commissions his disciples to "make disciples of all the nations," he lives up to his name, Emmanuel, as he promises to "be with you always until the end of the world." He clearly wanted us to be a community faithful to his memory. He didn't want us to be stay-at-home, individual believers, but a people worshiping together and then going out into the world living lives that proclaim his name to others.

Our lives are not so different from those who lived and struggled during Christ's lifetime. His message then is the same today. Unless we take ownership of the Gospel message and come together, if only two or three at a time, we will simply be left with an ideal that will never be realized.



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