

Unit One: A Community Over Time

Lesson 3

Where Two or Three Are Gathered...



Pray Together

Hanoon Hor, yev Vortvo, yev Hokvooy'n Surpo, Amen.

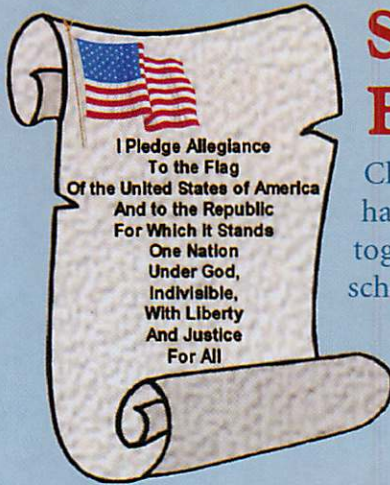
Dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, in you we are joined together and rise up to become a living, holy building founded on you. In you we are truly built together to become a beautiful dwelling in which we live by your Spirit. Amen.

(based on Ephesians 2:21-22)

Quick Quiz

Mark the correct answer.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that Scripture is useful for all of the following except
a teaching b correcting c engineering d rebuking
- Proverbs 12:18 says "Reckless words pierce like a
a sword b bee sting c needle d scissors
- Proverbs 17:5 says "He who mocks the _____ shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished."
a illiterate b victim c slow d poor
- The _____ place Bibles in hotel rooms.
a Amorites b Hittites c Gideons d Hebrews
- The Armenian translation of the Bible is known as the
a oldest translation b queen of translations c easiest translation d newest translation



Symbols of Belonging

Clubs, sports teams, schools, professions, and other organizations often have pledges, uniforms, and other customs that help bond members together. One example of this is the way we say the Pledge of Allegiance in school each morning. This reminds us that we are Americans.

What things do you do in school, on a team, or in some organization that bonds you together with the other members?



Where Two or More Are Gathered...

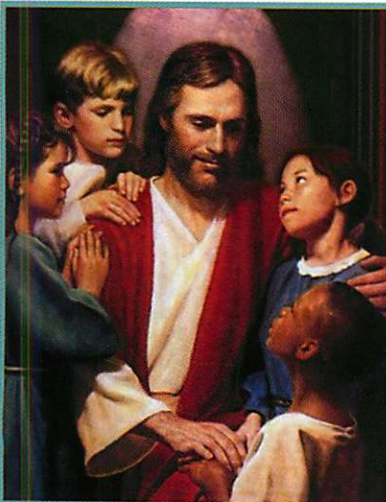
The Bible reminds us that living in this world is like being a soldier. It wouldn't be very helpful if a general sent out a single soldier against an entire army. If a group of troops is well-trained and closely bonded to one another, however, they can be effective against even a much larger force.

Just as soldiers drill together, God's people also need to strengthen themselves by practicing their faith together. Like the threads in your experiment, we will be much stronger if we stick together in faith. Our Divine Liturgy is a way we come away from the busy world for awhile to focus as a group on worshiping and learning about God. We publicly

admit our standing as sinners. We share Holy Communion together, which reminds us each week that Jesus' willing sacrifice of his own life is the reason we can be a part of his family.

Within the framework of the church service, with its Scripture readings, ancient prayers, reverent rituals, and beautiful hymns, we see that others feel the same as we do about Jesus. We are strengthened and refreshed by the Holy Spirit. It will be easier for us to follow him in our daily lives, because we are nourished by last Sunday's Badarak.

Jesus tells us to come together in worship. In Matthew 18:20 Jesus says, "For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." He knew from the very beginning of the church that we would need each other in our Christian life.



Did You Know?

Do you feel as though kids are often excluded from important events? When the disciples tried to keep children away from Jesus, he said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

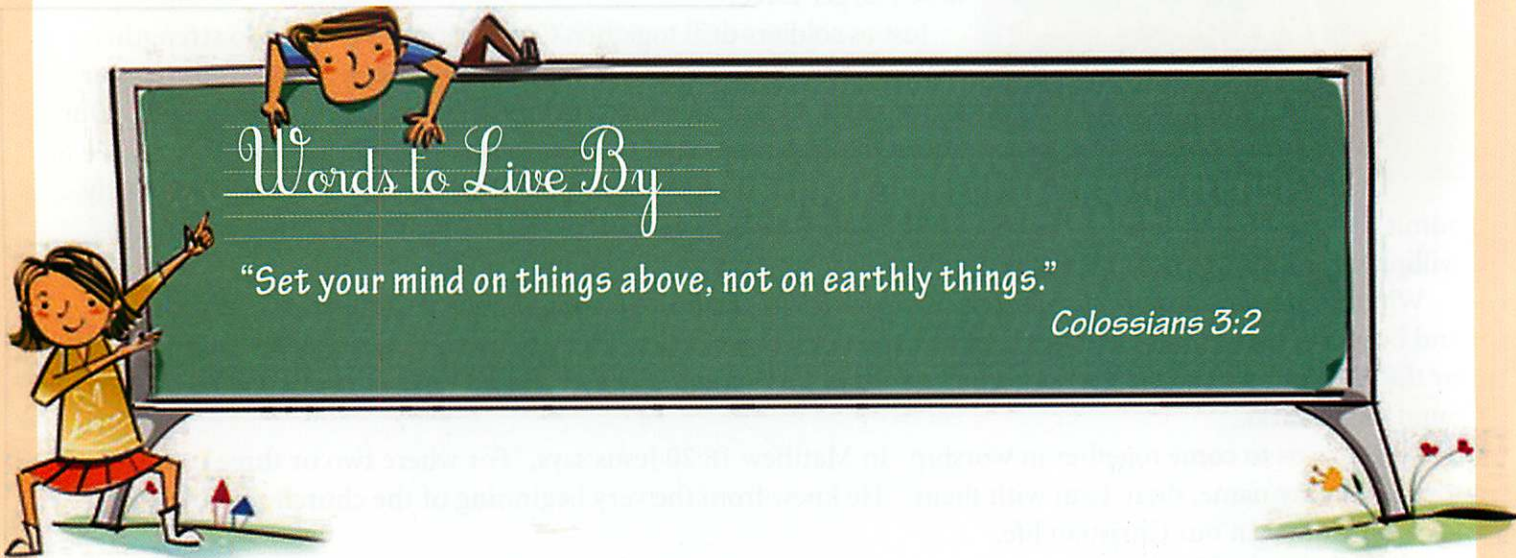
Matthew 19:14

Send in the Reinforcements!

After the apostles went into each new place to tell others about Christ, their work with that city was not done. From the map of Paul's missionary journeys, we see that he traveled widely. Without his presence, some of the early churches began to squabble among themselves or develop wrong ideas. Paul would come back to them and steady them, and if he could not go in person, he encouraged them with letters, some of which appear in the Bible. Similarly, the reliability of our church teachings helps keep us on a steady course to God's Kingdom.

Does this mean that the Holy Spirit will not be with us outside of church, or when we are not around other believers? Thankfully, God is happy to be with us anytime, and anywhere.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to "pray continually." In this way, we may stay close to him day and night, in church or far away from home.



A Helping Hand

Read Hebrews 10:23-25.

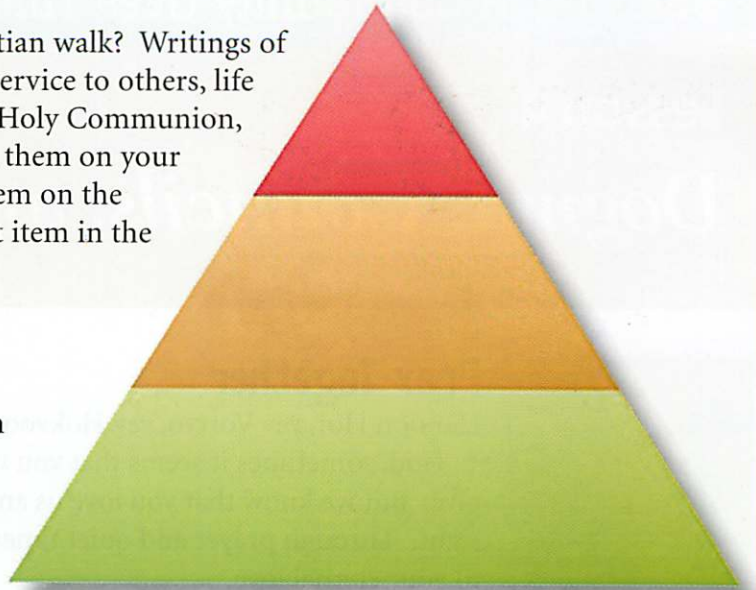
rites, and to their land. The LORD has commanded you to you, and you must that I have commanded you strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. As summoned Joshua and the people of all Israel to...

A Christian Life Pyramid

How helpful are the following things in your Christian walk? Writings of church fathers, Sunday School, private prayer life, service to others, life of the church (as lived by parents, family, friends), Holy Communion, the Bible, Badarak and other church services. Rank them on your Christian Life Pyramid. Put the most important item on the bottom of the pyramid, the second most important item in the next space, and so on.

Discuss these questions as a class:

- Would you invite a school friend to come to church with you one Sunday? Why or why not?
- Why did you come to Sunday School this morning?
- Imagine you and your family move to another city where there is no Armenian Church available. What should you do about your worship?



Our Armenian Way

Have you ever heard anyone complain about the length of the Badarak? If you were a monk in a monastery in ancient Armenia you would be praying almost all the time! For centuries our monks followed the “Zhamakirk,” or “Book of Hours,” a daily routine of services and prayers that began long before sunrise and continued into the night. The daily devotions were divided into seven sections, which are the Nocturns, Matins, Sunrise, Midday Hours, Vespers, Peace Hour, and Rest Hour.

Today, many of the rituals have been combined and shortened because there are so few Armenian monasteries and monks. Wouldn't it be interesting to trade the noisy attractions of today's world for a quiet, simple life where every single day is filled with prayer, worship, and the study of God?

