

Why Fish Need Each Other ... and Why You Need the Church

Lately, I have been learning a few things about fish. And along the way, I've learned a few things about the church.



For instance, I assumed the fish that traveled alone was the fish that survived. After all, doesn't it seem logical that a large, hungry, predatory fish would be more attracted to a large school of fish where there would be greater opportunities to eat than to one solitary fish? That's how it works for me. Don't judge me, but I'd rather hit the all-you-can-eat buffet where I can get all the wings I want rather than a hoity-toity restaurant that serves a tiny piece of snobby chicken with some sauce I can't pronounce.

I've also assumed the lone fish would eat better without the competition of other fish. Again, I get more wings at the buffet if there are not six other men engaging in the sin of gluttony. (I don't engage in the sin of gluttony; I ... um, stock up on calories ... y'know, just in case.)

Yes, if I were a fish, I'd go it alone. But then again, I'd be dead.

Fish survive better in schools. Fish swim together for companionship—and survival.



Instead of competing for food, fish in schools actually help each other find food. For example, a school of goatfish will explore a sandy bottom for food. When one goatfish finds food and begins digging in the sand, he attracts the others and they all can eat. No longer is it every fish for himself; the goatfish work together.

Traveling in schools is also helpful in avoiding danger. The sheer numbers in a school of fish create visual

confusion for a hungry predator. The school then performs graceful and effective maneuvers all around the enemy. They twist, wheel, and flow all around the bewildered predator, leaving a vacuum around its hungry mouth. Then the fish rejoin out of sight at the rear of their enemy.

The church is like a school of fish. Christians need the support and encouragement of each other to face a hostile world. If you've ever been in those situations where you felt like you were the only Christian for miles, then you also know the satisfaction you feel when you meet with other Christians for worship.

The fellowship of the church helps me see that I am not alone. I stand better when I stand with others.

"Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up. Also, if two lie down together, they can keep warm; but how can one person alone keep warm? And if someone overpowers one person, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not easily broken" (Ecc. 4:9-12).

My church family and the head of that family, Jesus Christ, are standing with me. In the church, we can help each other get spiritually fed. As one person digs in the Bible and learns, he can teach the rest of us and we all grow. Christian growth works best when it is a group process; in the church we teach and encourage one another.

The church, then, ought to be like a school of fish, swimming together and providing each other growth, protection, and encouragement.

"And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).