

THE BOND BETWEEN US
Luke 24:36-49

Rebecca Manley Pippert, in her book *Out of the Salt Shaker and into the World*, gives an example of that kind of bond. She tells about a brilliant college student called Bill who became a Christian. He was part of that generation who dressed differently from their parents. For instance, he never wore shoes, no matter what the weather, and no matter where he went, he dressed in a t-shirt and jeans. In fact, even when he visited the campus church he was always dressed that way, in a t-shirt and jeans and, of course, without shoes. One Sunday during the summer, however, he decided to visit a local church near the campus. He came a little late and since the church was full, Bill walked down the aisle looking for a seat. Because of his less-than-normal attire, no one in the congregation would move in to give him a seat. So, not finding a seat, Bill sat down on the floor on the carpet in front of the front pew. You can imagine the tension in the congregation with that young man dressed in blue jeans and a t-shirt and not wearing shoes, sitting on the carpet in front of them.

Just when things seemed unbearable, an elderly man in the congregation got up from his seat and began walking up the aisle toward Bill. People looked at each other. They were certain they knew what would happen. This gentleman would ask the young fellow to get up and leave. When the older fellow came to where Bill was sitting, he stopped, and, to everyone's surprise, slowly lowered himself to the floor, and the two of them sat there and worshipped together. Naturally, at first people were shocked -- but as they thought about it -- they were moved. For that was an example of the kind of love and acceptance they were called to offer one another in the Church. It was an example of the bond that Jesus has forged between us through his death and resurrection.

As the Church of Jesus Christ, we are called to welcome one another, to forgive, to love, and to accept each other with the same acceptance, love, and forgiveness we have received from God. There is no room in the church for petty complaining, gossip, griping, or hurtful criticism of one another. When we cut each other up, we only destroy the bond that Jesus has died to create within us.

God bless,
Pastor Barbara