

## To Ponder:

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

### *Community, a Quality of the Heart*

The word *community* has many connotations, some positive, some negative. Community can make us think of a safe togetherness, shared meals, common goals, and joyful celebrations. It also can call forth images of sectarian exclusivity, in-group language, self-satisfied isolation, and romantic naiveté. However, community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another. Community is the fruit of our capacity to make the interests of others more important than our own (see [Philippians 2:4](#)).

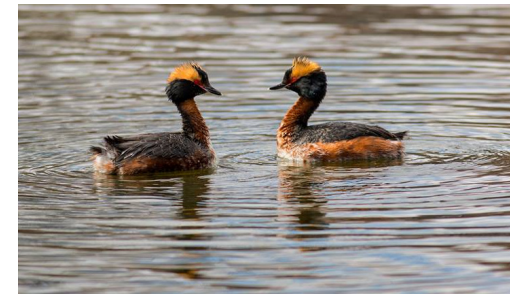
The question, therefore, is not "How can we make community?" but "How can we develop and nurture giving hearts?" Henri Nouwen



## A Blessing: Nan C. Merrill (adapted)

Blessed are you who help others,  
those who are in need.  
For as you offer your presence,  
you come to know the  
Divine Guest in your heart.

Even when your friends are unkind  
to you,  
when they ignore or tease  
you,  
Do not become mean or spiteful.  
Rather, send them love and  
imagine light around them.  
Kindness comes from love, and  
those who practice love  
are truly blessed.



Sharing...

a word...

a phrase...

a reflection...

## *Lord, Teach Us to Pray Joe Wise*

Lord, teach us to pray, it's been a long and cold December kind of day  
with our hearts and hands all busy in our private little wars  
we stand and watch each other now from separate shores  
we lose the way.

I need to know today the way things should be in my head. I need to know for  
once now the things that should be said. I've got to learn to walk around as if I  
were not dead. I've got to find a way to learn to live.

I still get so distracted by the color of my skin. I still get so upset now when I find  
that I don't win. I meet so many strangers I'm so slow to take them in. I've got to  
find a way to really live.

I stand so safe and sterile as I watch a man fall flat. I'm silent with a man who'd  
like to know just where I'm at. With the aged and the lonely I can barely tip my  
hat. I need to see the sin of I don't care.

I stand so smug and sure before the people I've outguessed. IT let a man be  
who he is I still see as a test. And when it all comes down to must, I'm sure my  
way is best. I've got to find what room means in my heart.

I walk and fall myself alone can't tolerate a guide. And when the camps split up  
I'm sure to put you on my side, and dare someone to challenge me and swear I  
will not hide. I've got to find a better way to live.

I mouth so many things, take so little time to weigh. I've let it all slip by in the  
sweep of yesterday. I can't believe you mean it all to grace me on my way. I've  
got to find a way to really live.

Lord, teach us to pray we still believe that we can find a better a way.  
Teach us to pray. We lose the way. Teach us to pray.

### *Thank You For Joining Us!*

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## *Giving hearts:*

*alive for one another!*



**Centering Space**

A ministry of prayer,  
listening & direction

Our prayer is characterized  
by silence ~

*Be still and know that I am God!*

In that silence we listen for a new word.

God is present in all our lives.

God cares for us, and  
our life experiences are a source  
of deepening knowledge of God and self.

Inspired by God's Word in the silence  
we share from our hearts.