

Musings and Reflections



I was recently doing some lay-out work, looking for clip-art showing people. Let me emphasize that; I was looking for *people* – not just *person*, but *people*. I must have been on Screen 30-odd, of the 100+ available, when I realized that, although I'd put in the keyword *people*, what I was actually getting was pictures of *individuals* – an individual at work, an individual at play, an individual walking down the street, an individual in a car.

Even the musicians were all featured just as single folks, strumming or tootling away in their own individual ways.

There were a few exceptions – doctors were always shown with patients (glad to know they're actually with somebody, not just filing paperwork). And fighters were shown in pairs. I guess it would be kind of tough to have a fight all by yourself....

Along about page 60, I decided I'd better redo my keyword, so I went to *community*. That, they don't have. No clip art whatsoever under that keyword.

That probably shouldn't have come as a surprise, given the amount of attention we pay these days to what *I* want, what *I* need, what *my* preferences are. We're big on individual – individual needs, individual desires, individual rights. And there's no question but that those are important – but I wonder sometimes whether we miss *community* in that focus on the individual.

I'm a musician – amateur, true, but a musician – and as much as I like singing and playing by myself, I've got to admit that playing in a group is a whole lot more fun. Sometimes it means I've got to back off on my voice, my instrument, so that I don't stand out from the group, so that I contribute to the harmony rather than stealing the show. Sometimes, in fact, it means that I've got to shut up, because other instruments and voices are making the music at that point. It always means that I've got to be paying attention to what the group as a whole needs, and what my contribution to that group needs to be, regardless of how I want to play or sing.

This time of year is another good time for remembering group and community, and that I'm only part of a whole, that I'm not just all on my own. It's the *community*, as well as the individuals in it, that is blessed by God's gift of Jesus; it's the community, as well as the individuals in it, that act in faith to celebrate that gift, and to live in the renewed promise of God's gift of Jesus. My part is important – but it's only a part. I'm important – but so are all the people around me, whose lives I touch.

May you know the blessing of God as we celebrate the gift of Jesus, God's son; and may you both know the blessing of community, and be a blessing to your community.