

Community



Tommy Gray | December 5, 2010

In a nutshell:

Often we settle for less than *The Real Thing*. In the church, one of those things is true Biblical community. God has wired us for community, but we experience very little *real* community.

Icebreaker:

Research says we spend 30 hours/week in front of some kind of screen.

Discuss: What is your favorite screen? What show, game, social network, or activity is the most appealing to you?

Community is Important

George Gallup says that Americans “are among the loneliest people on the planet.” 40% say they have spent *no time* with their neighbors. Scott Peck says: “We are trapped in our tradition of rugged individualism.” Even our immune systems become depleted due to isolation.

Discuss: Author and psychologist Larry Crabb says: “Connecting is life, and loneliness is the ultimate horror.” What do you think are the effects of living isolated lives?

1. *You are created in the image of God.* (God exists in community and we’re created in His image.) 2. *Jesus modeled community in His earthly life.* He spent most of his time with 12, and of those, three. He wanted them with him for the hardest stretch of his life. 3. *The early church found strength in community.* Read Acts 2: 42-47 aloud. (Use multiple translations if available).

Discuss: Which of these “cases” for *community* is the most compelling to you?

Benefits of Biblical Community

Some benefits of community are: Healing: *James 5:16*. Encouragement: *Hebrews 10:25*. Strength: *Ecclesiastes 4:12*. Rebuke: *Proverbs 27:6*. Read and discuss each of these passages. (Use multiple translations if available).

Discuss: Which of these are strengths in your group? Which do you need to work on?

Choosing the best way

We have equated *activity* with *community* and *coming to church* with *being the church*. The church must *simplify* (ruthlessly eliminate programs) and *prioritize* (community above action).

Discuss: What would have to change for Friendship Church to become the kind of church that embraces community in small groups?

As a Group:

Community is a place where no one stands alone; where you can *know* and *be known*, *love* and *be loved*, *serve* and *be served*. How is your small group doing at providing this kind of environment? How can you make this happen more deeply and more often?