

Deeper Community (Part 1)

Introduction

Acts 2:46-47

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Big meetings, home meetings and expansive and inclusive. Don't let how your house or sofas look stop you.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Meeting or not meeting is a habit

It's easy to give up when it comes to deeper community

We need to be encouraged to love and do good deeds

The company we keep can either encourage us or cause us to give up

Romans 16:17

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

God values our unity so much that we are urged in scripture to keep away from divisive people.

Division comes in many forms; gossip, doctrine, slander etc

I. 10 Things that block deeper community

1. Independent spirit

Romans 12:4-5

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

2. Stinginess

Acts 4:32

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.

Develop a stewardship mindset where you don't claim things as your own but as owned by God and entrusted to you.

3. Superiority and Inferiority complex

Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Power distance in our cultures can hinder deeper community.

Why can't you talk to an older person or father figure about certain matters?

When we don't view people aright there is often approval addiction, Parent/child transactional analysis and idolizing of people.

4. Non mutual – feeling used

Prov 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

5. Peer Pressure

Bent toward man and not straightened toward God.

Proverbs 13:20

He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm

You become like the people you spend most of your time with.

Ephesians 5:11

Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

I have seen many times how unwise friendships ruin true biblical community and marriages.

6. Bullying and violence

People will avoid that which they fear.

Ephesians 4:29

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

7. The spirit of division

- a. Racial prejudice
- b. Tribalism
- c. Classism
- d. Chauvinism, Misogyny and Misandry
- e. Generational gap

Galatians 3:28-29

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Often, we embrace the spirit of division due to our perceived lack of common ground. However, we have Jesus and His Spirit in common. You have one “ancestor”, Abraham, so don’t over identify with your so-called heritage. No additional labels are necessary. Do you love people more just because they can speak your language. How can you be proud of skin colour if we are the same body? Evolution has no place in biblical Christianity. Your kids don’t have to be the same skin colour as you in order for you to love them. We are living proof of that.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

When we don’t walk deeply in the Spirit we then struggle to connect as we are only connected naturally.

Titus 2:3-5

3 Older women, likewise, are to be reverent in their behaviour, not slanderers or addicted to much wine, but teachers of good. 4 In this way they can train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, managers of their households, kind, and subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be discredited....

8. Relational wounds from betrayal

Unforgiveness, Self-protection, shame and cynicism all cause relational dysfunction and detachment.
Proverbs 17:9

Anyone who overlooks an offense promotes love, but someone who gossips separates close friends.

9. Exhaustion

Gal 6:9-10

9Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due time we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up.

10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to the family of faith....

10. Pettiness

Romans 14:1

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarrelling over disputable matters.

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