

Community

SIMPLY SAID

The practice of community is the commitment to other followers of Jesus for the giving and receiving of love.

OUR CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Dr. Robert Bellah says the defining trait of America is "radical individualism". This mixed with the reality that "self-imposed solitude might just be the most important social fact of the 21st century"¹ has resulted in America's "epidemic of loneliness and isolation"². The current of culture is not and will not naturally push us toward deep connectedness with our neighbors around us. Whether we notice it through the glowing screens of those standing next to us, through the disappearing of the front lawn, or the emphasis on at-home entertainment, we have this feeling sense that we are more disconnected as people than we once were. This has directly impacted the church.

A DIFFERENT OPTION

In God's perfect wisdom, he has set up a way for followers of Jesus and others to fight the isolation of the world: the local church. The local church is the place we are invited to enter a countercultural community of people that have the mutual desire to shape all of life all for Jesus. The local church is the place that our faith gets worked out. The local church is the place that we receive and give love for God and our neighbor.

THE KEY TO COMMUNITY

There are many good churches God has established. There are good Christians. There are good communities. For us to actually experience the goodness of community there are some key ingredients we must have

Commitment | Transience is the temptation that comes alongside our culture. The beauty of community comes on the other side of long-term commitment.

Confession | There are good communities. There are no perfect communities. We must confess that the community we are part of has messy people, including us.

Connection | We receive life, love, gifts, care, kindness, wisdom, etc., from our connection with people. We must be willing to connect with others who might not be like us, but have the same Savior as us.

Contribution | We give ourselves and the gifts God has given us for the sake of the people we are connected to. We also allow ourselves to give time to those that have not "earned" it.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

Reflecting God | "Humans are fundamentally relational, reflecting the relational nature of our triune God."³

Our Purpose | "We are designed for and defined by our relationships."⁴ Our purpose, our pursuit of Jesus, and our life is lived out in relationship with others.

Becoming | We become who we are around. If we want to shape our life in the way of Jesus, we must surround ourselves with others who pursue the same.

HOW DO WE EMBRACE THIS PRACTICE

Commit to community | Commit to church, to a smaller group of believers, and to a core community.

Connect others into the community | Help connect others who are disconnected.

Contribute to the community | Use your gifts and time to serve.

Utilize the Community Resources and Worksheet | <https://nm.redemptionaz.com/community>

¹ *The Anti-Social Century*, Derek Thompson,

² *Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation*, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, U.S. General Surgeon

³ *Relational Spirituality*, Todd Hall

⁴ *The Relational soul*, James Cofield and Richard Plass