

What Does Christian Community Look Like?

Adapted from *A Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren

Real Fellowship...

...is experiencing life together. It includes:

- Unselfish loving
- Honest sharing
- Practical serving
- Sacrificial giving
- Sympathetic comforting

It is NOT simply socializing, conversation, food and fun!

...is found in groups of two or more people united towards a common purpose:

- Jesus could have had more disciples, but picked 12 because he knew participation would wane otherwise.
- Matthew 18:20 – “Where two or more are gathered in my name, I am there in their midst.”

The Four Levels of Fellowship

The following fellowship levels typically distinguish Christian communities:

1. The fellowship of Sharing – Getting together for accountability and encouragement.
2. The fellowship of Studying God’s Word – Studying God’s will for our lives in Scripture together.
3. The fellowship of Serving – Ministering together on mission’s trips, in the community, etc.
4. The fellowship of Suffering – Entering into each other’s pain and grief to carry one another’s burdens (Philippians 3:10; Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 10:33-34).

Group Discussion Questions

- 1) How does fellowship with others differ from our fellowship with Christ? Why?
- 2) In general, what barriers exist that prevent genuine fellowship from developing in communities?
- 3) What are some personal barriers to finding authentic fellowship in THIS community?
- 4) How could this community be a more open place of sharing?

12 Biblical Characteristics of Christian Community

Authentic community should be a place for...

- 1) Encouragement against sin (Hebrews 3:13).
- 2) Diversity of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- 3) Identification as believers (John 13:35).
- 4) Authentic sharing and confession (1 John 1:7-8; James 5:16).
- 5) Giving AND receiving (1 Corinthians 12:25).
- 6) Sympathy, not quick answers or shallow sorry’s (Colossians 3:12).
- 7) Mercy. No grudges or resistance to go deeper with others b/c of negative past experiences (2 Corinthians 2:7; Colossians 3:13).
- 8) Honesty (Ephesians 4:15, Galatians 6:1-2; Proverbs 24:26, 28,23).
- 9) Humility (1 Peter 5:5; Romans 12:16; Philippians 2:3-4).
- 10) Courtesy (Romans 12:16, 15:2).
- 11) Confidentiality (Proverbs 16:28).
- 12) Dedicated commitment, not convenience (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:46).