

Community Part 2

Community Within

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Arrivals and Departures

- Sometimes it isn't until we're dramatically reunited with or separated by a loved one that we realize just how much we value one another.
- These moments of hugs, kisses, tears, hellos and goodbyes are emotionally charged, passionate, and filled with sentiment.

Acts 20: 36-38

- Paul sees says goodbye to his beloved Ephesian friends one last time. Scenes like these show us just how close knit, and connected the first Christians were. There is deep love not only in the name of Jesus, but also the bond we find in him.

Genesis 1 & 2

- Beyond sentiment, however, stands the reality that God has designed and purposed us for relationship, togetherness and intimacy.
- The first negative statement God makes in the creation narrative is that it's "*not good for man to be alone*".
- God recognizes the intrinsic design of his creation in need of others. He creates woman. Man was never intended for isolation.

Large / Medium / Small

- The Church expresses itself through relationship in many ways, large gatherings (Acts 2. 42), house churches (Acts 2. 42) and intimate one-on-one relationships (Paul's relationship with Timothy, Titas)

God's Labour for Healthy Community

- Giving of the Law for harmonious living
- Jesus' choice to live his message in community
- Jesus teaching that Christians will be identified by love for each other (John 13:35)

Tension

- We know relationship is natural, necessary and needed...but it's also must be intentional, and becomes, at times, uncomfortable.
- Proverbs 19:18 (the intentionality and consistency we exhibit in the discipline of a child might also be needed in committing to community life if we truly value it and wish to see fruit later on)

- Disengage and risk disaster. Get involved and risk finding real life.

Discussion Questions:

- What has been your experience of family? Good, bad? A mix?
- How easily do you open up to others?
- What scares you about vulnerability, community and relationship?
- Share a story of when you believe you experienced real connection or care within a relationship or community.
- Where to you think God is leading you into community this year? Where is he nudging you?
- How can you serve to become an even more intentional architect of healthy community in your circles? How do *you* think you cultivate community best?