

**Being Called Alongside:
The What and Why of Community
Hebrews 10:23-25**

Intro: In the beginning everything was good, however there was one exception. The animals had companions for one another but man was alone. God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone" – *Gen 2:18*. While God created woman to give companionship to the man, this statement also reveals mankind's need for community.

- In a place of sinless perfection in union with God, God describes man as "'alone' and God says this aloneness is 'not good.'" Sometimes in church circles when people feel lonely, we will tell them not to expect too much from human relationships, that there is inside every human being a God-shaped void that no other person can fill. That is true. But apparently, according to the writer of Genesis, God creates inside this man a kind of 'human shaped-void' that God himself will not fill. **No substitute will fill this need in you for human relationships. Not money. Not achievement. Not busyness. Not books. Not even God Himself. Even though this man was in a state of sinless perfection, he was 'alone.' And it was 'not good'"** John Ortberg, *Everybody's Normal*, 31-32
- The opening chapters of Genesis reveals our need for to in relationship with God, the creator but it also reveals our need for relationship with one another. The Bible is very clear that the Christian faith can't be done in a vacuum. Its so easy to isolate ourselves but remember, the sheep who isolate themselves are the ones who get eaten. Today we are going to be talking about our need for community as Christians, the what and why of community. Our text will be Hebrews 10:23-25 will echo a similar idea of a need for community. Let's turn there together.

Why are we not in community with other Christians? – Hebrews 10:25 "Not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some"

- Season of work or school
 - Listen to the Spirit
- Tried it and it didn't fit
 - Those wounds are hard
 - We need to get connected
 - Try again, each small group has its own personality, ask God how he would have you be a part of that group/another group
- I'm scared people will see who I really am
 - Freedom in people knowing you and accepting you, its hard, a leap of faith
- I don't think I need it
 - Biblically, you are incorrect in this and I hope that this message shows you that you do.
- #1 reason is time; we are so busy
 - rearranging of priorities, maybe it's a short term commitment, 6-8 weeks with a group, once you see the joy of it, it may be more of a priority for you. Listen to the Lord in this, need a balance of family and ministry and small groups.

- Scriptures states, “Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some”
 - We need other believers and it’s a joy to be with them, its an act of obedience to be with other believers. Our focus today will be looking how to obey and understand this idea, this revelation of our need for community.
- **TRANS:** When we meet together in Christian Community, what does it look like? A place of encouragement, a place of being called alongside each other.

Community is a place of being called alongside one another – Hebrews 10:25 “But encouraging one another”

- Being called alongside – parakaleo
- Encouragement is done in relationship
 - We need each other
- 3 translations of this word
 - Encourage: Google definition: The action of giving someone support, confidence or hope
 - Exhort: someone instructing us when we get a little off track giving us practical steps of action in our lives.
 - Comfort: We need people to comfort us when we are down.

Why do we need to be called alongside one another?

- As we meet together, we love and care for one another “let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works” – Hebrews 10:24
 - We get to meet spiritual, emotional and physical needs
 - How have I been cared for in community?
 - I’ve had my spiritual, emotional and physical needs met
 - Community is where I get wisdom for life decisions and direction
 - When discouraged find emotional support
 - When have a physical need, the people of God often need it
 - Example working on my lawn: someone tilled my front lawn and another helped me level it. It meant a lot
 - How have we cared for others?
 - Given people a place to belong
 - Meet physical needs
 - Opportunities to use spiritual gifts
 - A place to find honest and safe relationships
 - **APP: Be Willing to Love and Be Loved in Community**
- We need community to help us hold fast our Hope in Christ
 - “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering... not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some” – Hebr. 10:23-25
 - Natural tendency is to drift away from Jesus
 - In community we receive comfort and encouragement in difficult times. This helps direct us back towards Christ.
 - **APP: Find Comfort in difficult times through community, it takes us asking and also us looking for others in difficulty.**

- In Community we receive regular maintenance.
 - Others help us see Christ's beauty.
 - Why? Sin is so quick to deceive us, we need others encouragement to believe the truth of God's word
 - *"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin"- Hebrews 3:13*

Conclusion: Encouragement to be in Christian community

- **APP: first time to church in a long time:** maybe you've really been disconnected from church and from other believers for a while, this is God's nudge for you to commit to being a part of a church family.
- **APP: Coming to church but not relationally connected to other believers:** This is an encouragement to take a step of faith and be committed to getting connected. It may be a little tough at first but it is so worth it and such a joy to be a part of.
- **APP: Newer Christian and didn't know that God longs for you to be a part of a church family:** Now you know and there are opportunities to get connected.
- **APP: Some of you are already very connected to a church family:** encouragement to keep enjoying it, to look out for encouraging those who are disconnected and inviting others to be a part of the ~~fellowship~~ ^{fellow}ship you are in.
- **How is the Spirit inviting you to be in Christian Community?**
 - Men's Ministry, women's youth, trail life, MS, HS, AHG
 - Connect Groups
 - Potluck fellowship once a month – Carman's
 - YA group – King, Bryants
 - Home Fellowship on Ephesians – Shires
 - Study on Marriage, "When Sinner's Say I do" – Dickson
 - Study on Parenting, video series – Krims
 - Study on Forgiveness – Drost
 - Connect Board Currently and Videos coming
 - Call people on the board or call me or email me and I can direct you as well

Communion

- Meeting together is vital for longevity of our Hope in Christ
 - We need community to help us hold fast our Hope in Christ
 - How is the Spirit inviting me to be connected?