

An aerial photograph of a group of people on surfboards in turquoise water. The surfboards are in various colors like blue, orange, and white. The people are scattered across the frame, some standing on their boards, others in the water. The overall scene is bright and vibrant.

practicing the way

community

Jesus' Radical Idea: Family

Based on last week's Practice, ask yourself:

What has stood out in recent teachings about Community?

What role has Community played in my life with Jesus over the years?

What Community rhythms did I practice this past week and how did it go?

Overview

"Jesus likened his community to a family. At first this sounds nice and even sentimental, but this was actually one of Jesus' most radical ideas, one that got Him killed. It was radical in the first century and it is just as radical in the 21st Century." — John Mark Comer

Jesus' idea of community as family was radical for His generation because it crossed family, tribal, ethnic, national, and even gender lines. It is radical for ours because it tears down extreme individualism and dark tribalism which says, "Don't look to God to define you. Look elsewhere: to yourself, to someone, or to anything other than God. That's what will make you happy, successful, and satisfied. Look to what you can do or the identity you create to define you." Instead, Jesus replaces what we think and feel with what He calls us to—family: God is our father, Jesus is His son, and we are His sons or daughters. When we accept and submit to Jesus, we become family, brothers and sisters; practicing His way.

This week we looked at what it means to be family, what it means to be a brother and sister in this type of Community. To become this type of Community Family, we look to scripture and eight practices of Jesus. Just like all families, our communities won't be perfect and at times they will be messy, but they are what Jesus has called us to.

Scripture

Give each of your community members a piece of scripture from this list to read to the rest of the group: John 13:35, Romans 12:10, 1 Thess. 4:9, Romans 12:10, Romans 12:16, Romans 14:13, Romans 15:14, Romans 16:16, 1 Cor. 11:33, 1 Cor. 12:25, 2 Cor. 13:11, Gal. 5:13, Eph. 4:2, Eph. 4:32, Eph. 4:32, Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16, Jam. 5:16, 1 Th. 4:18, Heb. 10:24, 1 Pet. 4:9.

Discussion Questions

Which of the "one anothers" do you think are most important for family?

What are some of the biggest differences between friends and family?

How do you foster family?

Practice

The following eight practices are designed to help your Community foster a sense of family, just like a gardener cultivates the soil they plant in. That's what Jesus did throughout his ministry and models for us to do within our own Communities. As you go through these practices, discuss which ones fulfill the "one anothers" you read, which ones you want to do on your Community nights, and which ones you'll do throughout the week. Pick several to commit to this week, and add others in the coming weeks until you're doing them all.

Know and Be Known. Show up at your Community Night, family nights, and mission projects. See each other throughout the week. Find ways to be in each other's lives. Ask questions. Go after relationship. Share your story and let them share theirs.

Live Life Together. Plan a bbq. Go camping together. Grab coffee with someone in your Community. Go bowling. Spend a holiday together. Go on an annual retreat together. Utilize 'open invites' when you're around town shopping, grabbing lunch, going to each other's homes, etc.

Have Healthy Expectations. Here's the expectation: the weekly meal together centered around the practices is the essential commitment; everything outside the meal is optional. Spending time together is healthy, but people should not be guilted into being at every outing.

Build Intentional Time For Personal Connection. During your night together, discuss your "happies and crappies" / highs and lows / celebrations and frustrations. Play games together. Spending time knowing one another, catching up, and having fun together is not time wasted.

Love and Build Relationships With the "Difficult" People. Intentionally, and even specifically, love the difficult people, even when it's difficult. Don't hand-pick your Community by choosing the people you like and are easy to love. You didn't pick your family.

Look for Everyday, Ordinary Moments to Connect. Think about normal, everyday things that can be done with others: Grocery shopping, going to the gym, homework, watching a show, hanging out in each other's front yard or front porch.

Pray For One Another...And Do It Often. Split up men & women and pray for one another. Ask, "what can we pray for?" and then go for it.

Look For Tangible Needs You Can Meet in Each Other's Lives. Most tangible needs are pretty obvious: helping a family with a newborn baby, helping someone move, babysitting so an exhausted couple can have a date night, giving rides to the airport, etc. Creating a space in which people can have needs (Communion is a great opportunity for this). Maybe consider establishing a giving fund with your group so resources are readily available.

Closing Questions

1. What are some other ways a North Ridge Community can live like family?
2. Which of the practices outside of the meal do you think are signs of healthy Community?
3. What are some of the biggest roadblocks you could see to living like family?