

Practicing the Way part 9

“Community, No such thing as following Jesus alone...”

Spiritual Formation

“Our Society is losing the structures that it once had for bringing people together, individuals participate less in long-lasting communities, socialize less, and trust less. A confluence of entangled factors has been converging to produce a decline in social connection in the United States over the past 50 years. Boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials have become the most individualistic and materialistic generations, have less leisure time and more financial pressures, and consume more electronic entertainment in a more mindless way. We are, as a society, more relationally disconnected than we once were. This has negative consequences for our emotional and spiritual well-being.” Dr. Todd Hall, Connected Spirituality

“We are lonely, but fearful of intimacy, digital connections may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked lives allow us to hide from each other even if we are tethered together. We would rather text than talk. When technology engineer intimacy, relationships can be reduced to mere surface connections, and then redefines intimacy. Put otherwise, cyber intimacy slides into cyber solitude.” --Sherry Turkle Alone Together

In spite of all of our technology, real connection is more allusive than ever before and it’s hurting us, really hurting us.

Matthew 4:18-22

Matthew 9:9-13

Matthew 10:1-4

What is a zealot?

Matthew 20:20-28

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 4:32-35

Acts 5:1-6

There is a gap between the ideal of community and the messy reality of community and discipleship happens in the space in between all of this!

1. Community is not optional for a follower of Jesus.

Community is an incubator for our spiritual formation.

“Long-term interpersonal relationships are the crucible of genuine progress in the Christian life.”

“Those who love their dream of a church community more than they love the Christian community itself become destroyers of that Christian community even though their personal intentions may ever be so honest, earnest, and sacrificial.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

1 John 4:19-21

Christian spiritual growth and formation is as much as tethered to others as it is to God.

There is the ideal of community, the messy reality of community and the gap in between is where spiritual formation takes place.

Exposure and encouragement

Shadow side/self

Your shadow side is a culmination of your untamed emotions, less than pure thoughts and motives, and though largely unconscious, strongly influence and shape your behavior. It is the damaged and mostly hidden version of who you are. --- Pete Scazzero

Our deepest wounds come from relationships and our deepest healing comes from relationships.

2. Community is needed for a full life.
3. Community is not the same thing as having friends

Strong ties and weak ties

Communities are constituted by physical proximity, shared concerns, consequences, and common responsibilities. ---- Sheri Turkle

4. Community is the bi-product of commitment

The reality is: we cannot have community without commitment.

“The spiritual skill for staying put, to get somewhere.” Saint Benedict

5. Community takes time and intentionality

Community does not happen around a stage and a service it happens around tables

Practices/Application:

- Keep up the silence, solitude, prayer in your daily practice
- Incorporate teaching into your weekly practice

Liturgical Audit

- Spend a few minutes day and write down all your habits and routines
- How do you spend your week and weekends?
- What are these habits/practices doing to your heart?
- What do you need to eliminate/reduce and what spiritual practice replace it with it?

Pray about joining a EFC community group