

The welcome verse for this week is Ephesians 4:4-6: “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”



### **Practicing Community**

Acts 2:42-47; Romans 15:1-7; James  
5:13-16

**The Bottom Line:** Your life in community is a witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

#### **Introduction:**

Do you ever wish that the “Kingdom of God” was something you could see, hear, and feel? We can see, hear, and feel the Kingdom of God when we practice community.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, “Let him who cannot be alone beware of community; let him who is not in community beware of being alone.”

Just a few short weeks ago, we discussed the importance of solitude—the importance of a personal life with God, alone and away from the crowd. Today’s message is about the need for communal life with God.

#### **Tension:**

The water we swim in is hyper-individualism.

The American church has been steeped in it and we have become deeply misguided.

#### **Truth:**

Both a personal relationship with God and a communal life with God are necessary for flourishing in the Kingdom of God. “Me and Jesus” is a dangerous and deceiving mantra.

Community is built on the soil in which the cross of Jesus Christ was planted (cf. Ephesians 2:14-18).

The New Testament scriptural understanding is individuality, not individualism. Our individuality within the church is often what makes the church attractive to outsiders. When scripture states, “they had all things in common,” that doesn’t negate their individuality, but it does negate individualism.

### **Read Acts 2:42-47.**

We are a community made up of different stories, statuses, and personalities. We unite around one Savior and Lord, one story of good news, one reality of the Kingdom of God, and one hope of eternity with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Even within the larger community of believers, we find a smaller community of a few brothers and sisters who we practice the way of Jesus alongside.

Two core disciplines we should take up in our communities are confession and celebration.

### **Application & Conclusion:**

Ending where we began, if you’ve ever desired to have a tangible expression of the Kingdom of God, it will be found in community. Your life in community is a witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God. It’s a messy place full of messy people, but Jesus establishes and blesses it anyway. It is not good for man to be alone. The peace, joy, healing, and freedom you’ve longed for likely awaits you in community.

**Your Practice This Week** – Devote yourself to two or three other brothers and sisters in community. These people will be your support as you practice the way of Jesus together. Confess and celebrate, one with another.

### **Next Steps:**

- ☐ Commit to the weekly practice given by Pastor Matt.
- ☐ Read *The Great Omission* by Dallas Willard.
- ☐ Pray for the direction and invitations of the Holy Spirit to become evident.

**Discussion questions for group this week:**

- 1. What does this teach me about God?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. What does this teach me about me?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3. How do I apply this to my life?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4. If I could ask a question about this it would be....**