

Habits of Fully Devoted Disciples

THE THIRD HABIT - GROUP

John 17:20-23

- A. Community is an absolute necessity, a command from God, and his gift
- B. It's over-promised and under-delivered in the church
- C. It manifests in worship, small groups, families/marriages, and ministry teams; it's about our relationships - both with God and with others

COMMUNITY

- A. At the root of being made in God's image is relationship - the need for "community" has been written into our DNA from Creation
 - 1. The world is constantly searching for community
 - 2. In John 17, Jesus' tells us the source of real community: Jesus
- B. Community is "*the experience of knowing and being known, loving and being loved, serving and being served, celebrating and being celebrated in Jesus for the sake of others*"
 - 1. "*Knowing and Being Known*"
 - a. We'd all love to know and be known and be fully accepted
 - b. Fear stops us; at least slows us down. We've all been burned
 - c. Community doesn't happen without a willingness to risk transparency, and...when we're embraced, it is an incredible experience
 - 2. "*Loving and being Loved*"
 - a. Jesus: "*Love God with everything you got; Love your neighbor the same way*"
 - b. God offers irrational levels of his love; we are being loved
 - c. We long to share it but our ineptitude slows us down
 - 3. "*Serving and being Served*"
 - a. Servanthood is at the heart of building and sustaining community
 - b. Serving, and being open when someone wants to serve you
 - 4. "*Celebrating and being celebrated*"
 - a. We enhance our relationship by creatively celebrating each other
 - b. There is something to celebrate in everyone - if we just look
- C. Community is a gift from God we need to work hard at

CHALLENGE (CF. LUKE 24)

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)

- A. A. Luke 24 contains the story of two disciples walking the Emmaus Road
 - 1. Then Jesus joins them; they walk together
 - 2. They share communion ("withness"); they experience community
- B. We're all walking "the road to Emmaus"
 - 1. We've experienced suffering, betrayal, death; dashed dreams...
 - 2. We all need a community where our "*hearts can burn within us*"
 - a. A community that eagerly engages the stranger
 - b. A community where we are willing to share our heart
 - c. A community where together we can walk in our grief and run in our joy
 - d. A community centered in the Scripture where we hold each other in prayer
 - e. A community so engaging we don't hesitate to share it with others
 - f. A community we are willing to completely rearrange our life around
 - g. A community where our eyes can be opened and we can see Jesus!
- C. A distinguishing mark of a disciple is their commitment to each other
 - 1. We commit to worship together, grow together, and serve together
 - 2. We don't relate directly to other Christians, we relate to them through Jesus
 - 3. We belong together in Christ

MEMORY VERSE:

May all of them be one Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that they world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:21)

SOME QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON:

- How are you eagerly engaging the stranger?
- How are you enhancing your worship and the worship of others?
- What does it mean to you to be part of the body of Christ? How are you arranging your life around it?
- What people or groups are nurturing your soul and keeping you accountable?
- What people or groups are you nurturing and keeping accountable?
- How have you shared another's joy or sorrow recently?
- Where do you most clearly see Jesus working in your life?