

Spirit of *Koinonia*

Lesson 16 | February 5, 2025

The Holy Spirit is working to heal our disease of loneliness by uniting us. One body. The church of Jesus! Paul teaches, "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves," (Romans 12:10).

The love Jesus showed his friends, and the love he calls them to have for one another, embodies the love his Father has for him; the same love the Father shows to mankind in the Old Testament. The word for this love in Hebrew is *hesed*. We often translate it "steadfast love," as in Psalm 33:5.

Stages of Community

1. *Pseudo* community –

2. *Chaos* –

3. *True* community -

"When we become disillusioned, the temptation we face is to disengage in various ways: (1) we search for a "better" church community; (2) we stay on the edges of community; or (3) we convince ourselves that we're better off practicing solo Christianity. These temptations are almost automatic due to the individualistic and consumeristic culture in the Western world. When we disengage from Christian community, it becomes fragmented, and we collectively fail to create a new social order of love and to shine God's light in the world," Todd W. Hall.

How do we grow into people of devoted love?

- **Settling down for the long-haul in your local church.**

- **Drawing close to people in our community and sharing life with another.**

- **When offense, conflict and hurt occur, resist feeling surprised and lean in to work through the issue if possible.**

“God’s one plan for reaching the world is rooted in the community of broken people who gather with a desire to bring in God’s own dream kingdom of love and shalom. We will never be perfect people, but imperfect people committed to a radical Spirit-empowered love can change their relationships and the world.” – Adele Calhoun

RESOURCES

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, Peter Scazzero

Life Together, Dietrick Bonhoeffer

The Good and Beautiful Community, James Bryan Smith

Peacemaker Ministries App—A guide for relational repair

Greenwood’s Practice, Forgiveness

Made for People: Why we Drift into Loneliness and How to Fight for a Life of Friendship, Justin Whitmel Earley

Questions for reflection:

Settling down for the long haul in our local church.

1. If you have committed to a local church, what do you find life-giving about this commitment?
2. If you are not an official member of your church, is there anything that holds you back from making such a commitment?
3. What next step, if any, do you feel stirred to take as you consider being settled down for the long haul in your church? Inquiring about membership? Asking lingering theological questions? Writing a note of thanks to someone in leadership or a friend in your church?

Drawing close to people in our community and sharing life with one another.

1. If you are a part of a small group, think for a moment about what gifts have come to you through your commitment to this group. Please thank your Father for these gifts.
2. If you are not a part of a small group, what resistance do you sense to this commitment? Is there anything you can do to press through this resistance? Process past hurts? Explore the different kinds of groups available at your church? Make changes to your weekly schedule?

Resist feeling surprised and instead lean in to work through the issue if possible.

1. Is there someone in your church whom you hold anger against or find difficult to love? If so, please see *Greenwood’s Practice Forgiveness* for help with this.
2. Is there someone with whom you need to initiate repair in your relationship, someone who needs to hear you say you are sorry? Please ask the Lord for his help in repairing this relationship.