**1st Century Church connecting with a 21st Century World Part 3: Community**

Our mission

Our Vision

All about Jesus

Spiritual Transformation

A 1st Century Church lives in **COMMUNITY**

New Testament community:

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, **they were all together in one place.**(NIV)

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.(NIV)

Acts 2:43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.(NIV)

Acts 2:44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.(NIV)

Acts 2:45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.(NIV)

Acts 2:46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,(NIV)

A first century church lives in community.

Luke wrote the book of Acts. It is clear to me that he is underlying the importance of community in the Church. Community is foundational in the Church of Jesus.

Why is community important in a first century church?

1. **God’s kingdom is a unified kingdom**

Luke 11:17 "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall.(NIV)

God’s Kingdom will fall into ruin if we do not have Community.

**2. People can accomplish anything if they are unified.**

In Genesis 11 the people of the earth unified to build a tower and God said this about their unity.  
Genesis 11:6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.(NIV)

People can accomplish anything if they are unified. People can’t accomplish much when division is present….one only needs to look at our federal government as an example of this.

**3. Community combats hypocrisy.**

A hypocrite will say “I care about people” but will not ever give care.

A hypocrite will say “I love God and people” but will not ever live out that love.

Community is more than just a group of people gathering under a common banner. Community is a group of people living life together. You can gather under a banner, a denomination, a belief but never enter into life together.

AND if you TRULY enter into life together you will know about each other’s hurts.. Successes.. Failures.. Dreams.. Needs.. Giftings.

**4. Community is not one sided**

**Community test**

Ron Muller – A collector of hot-wheels and an engineer

Heather Staimple – A north Carolinian studying to be a video game creator

Patricia Pursley – A published writer who visits and helps an elderly lady each week named Pondra.

Robert Cortez – an avid youtuber

These are not small facts about these people. If you have a normal conversation with these people these facts are bound to come up. If you are in community with people you will know them… You should know more about each other than just facts. You should know each other’s struggles, fears, dreams…

Church people are usually doing well to simply remember names of people. 1st Century Church people go much further.

Do we know each other?

In this world, Community is hard to find….

**Culture struggle**

Our world struggles with community.

1. Neighborhoods have been reduced to a collection of homes with no real community….

2. People don’t talk like they used to. We stay at surface levels at all times.

3. People tend to “not want to get involved” when trouble strikes. People facing trouble don’t know who they can turn to for help and understanding. Do we have a better relationship with google than we do each other?

We can’t go with the flow of culture. We have to go against the stream.

Community will disrupt your flow. Are you willing to do that?

* They met together more than once a week.
* They shared life together.
* They worked past their differences and had all things in common.
* They made community a priority in their finances.

Check out how committed the 1st century church was to community.

Acts 4:32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.(NIV)

They shared what they had. They acted like their possessions did not belong to them. They acted like their possessions were God’s!

Acts 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.(NIV)

Acts 4:34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales(NIV)

Acts 4:35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.(NIV)

Look back at verse 34… There were no needy among them.. Contemplate that.

People who needed friendship. Taken care of in community.

People who needed food. Taken care of in community.

People who needed wisdom and advice. Taken care of in community.

People who needed prayer. Taken care of in community.

People that needed someone to pull them aside and say tough words like “I am afraid you are making a bad decision.” Taken care of in community.

Orphans and widows. Taken care of in community.

The people that society had turned their back on… taken care of in community.

**Culture struggle**

The world had NEVER seen a culture like this. The 1st century church embraced a new culture, a culture only found in God’s kingdom. We need to do the same in the 21st century.

HOW DO WE **RECAPTURE COMMUNITY CULTURE**

1. Repentance

2. Reconnect with the community builder, God

3. Reflect God’s community with other believers in the Church

4. Reach out to those outside the Church that live in our neighborhoods, work at our jobs, and attend our schools.

Recapturing community must continue when we leave a worship gathering and we do that by DOING the 3 Things we do when we leave

CONNECT WITH GOD

CONNECT WITH OTHER BELEIVERS

CONNECT OTHERS TO THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST

**ARE YOU REALLY CONNECTED TO THIS COMMUNITY?**

Do you just show up or do you go deeper? Are you actively doing life with other people?

We try to make opportunities for you to connect. We have connect groups, play groups, study groups, youth groups.. we are even planning a Prayer & Worship night.

But let’s be honest here. Community is not something you can program to happen. It is something you need to live out.

A 1st Century Church Community is what the Dallas Metroplex needs. Wherever you are as you are watching or listening to this sermon – a 1st Century Church Community is what your city needs.

God wants us to reach this entire area….Plano, Allen, Irving, Dallas, Wylie and on and on.

He doesn’t just want to see us bring people to a church service. He wants us to live in community with them.

**MUSICIAN**

**A 1st Century Church lives in community.**

What do you need to do today? You just heard a challenging message. You need to act.

* Repent for not being active in this community. Repentance is a turn around. It means you are going to change. Repent today!
* Learn how to get involved around here.
  + Sign up for Redemption class
  + Attend the all hands meeting happening soon
  + ASK. Just ask someone. Walk up and ask… “How are you connected?” Use our anonymous text line 214 856 0550
* Get involved. Find people to hang out with. Do life with each other. Start today. Simply walk up to someone and say… WE SHOULD HANG OUT.
* Spend some time in prayer asking God where He wants you to be in this community. Some of you have the exact gifting that someone needs. Share that gift.
* As I was talking I believe that God brought someone to your mind that you know needs to be in this community. Pray with them today. Come in to the 1st 2 feet of the altar and ask us to pray with you for them.

Closing

Connect groups

Redemption Class

All Hands Meeting