

# [community]

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## [introduction]

Story: Ireland plane fire – instantly community was created

Community is a group of people on a journey together. Community is a group of people navigating life together.

Who's got your back? Who's fighting for you? Who's tracking your life? Who knows what is really going on in your family?

Personally: Joanna and I have lots of friends. We both have older people in our lives to whom we looked for advice and accountability. We aren't having marriage problems. Everything is great.

But we want someone tracking with us as a couple. We want to pray together with other couples. We want to share our lives with other couples going through the same season of life. We sense a need to bring a layer of structure and intentionality to our otherwise random and unstructured friendships. We needed to "do life" together with other couples.

## What Does Community Look Like at CTK?

### [it is not created]

The word community comes from the word common. Common means the things we share that are the same. The bible opens with all humans being created in the likeness of God. You have something in common with every human. Every human is created for a life of mission and purpose and significance. Every human has limited time. You have that in common.

Think about what happened after 9/11 in Manhattan - all these people from all walks of life coming together. There was a sense that we were all in it together. Community was not created on 9/12, it was discovered.

***Gen 2.18 "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"***

It is not good for man to be alone. This God of community creates light and the earth and the animals and the plants and says it is all good. He then creates one man and observes this one man and realizes that it is not good for him to be alone. His outfits will never match.

This is Garden of Eden, pre-sin, and yet something wasn't right. Adam needed something more. He was alone.

This is why it is so dangerous when Christians say, "All you need is God."

It's nice except for the fact that God doesn't believe that. Right at the start you have a man alone and God says that it is not good.

**Gen 3.7 "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."**

The serpent comes along and tempts them to live outside of the way God intended them to live. They realized they were naked

Whenever you come across a word that sticks out to you (naked), ask yourself where does the word first occur in the text? It's called the principle of first mention. Often the writers are working off that first mention of the word and there are all kinds of subtleties attached to it.

Naked first comes up in **Genesis 2.25 "The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."**

Naked means unconditional love and acceptance, honesty and vulnerability. Two people who are fully themselves, totally accepting and embracing who they are and who the other person is.

And when they lived some other way (through taking the fruit) something happens and they become aware that they are naked. How did they know they were naked? They've been naked the whole time. You've been naked your whole life and someone points at you and tells you you're naked. It's an odd interaction.

The result of this awareness is they covered up. Where is the first place the sin wound appears? In their relationship.

They didn't eat the fruit and decide to rob a bank. They ate the fruit and covered up. They hid who they were from each other and from God.

The first thing the fall effects is how these two people get along. This is as old as humanity itself.

They cover up. *"I can't let you see who I really am. I'm not that comfortable. I can't tell you everything because you might judge me. I have to put on an act."*

The fig leaves are nothing new and it's all around us. We hide who we really are and what we are really like from all others.

Where once there was unrestrained embrace, there's distance. Where once there was intimacy, there's doubt. Where once there was unconditional love, there is ....

The danger with Bible studies or home groups or Life Groups - you can sit week after week with your fig leaf on and never let others really know what is going on.

Haven't you had the moment in a small group where you can say you're fine or you can tell the real story? You can be real and share your heart. The moment you do that, others will connect and pour out their hearts as well. That's community. When you take off your fig leaf, you'll discover that there is a profound community that has been there all along. We're hiding, we're moving too fast, we have a mask on and we're pretending to be somebody else.

## **[it's everyday]**

Technology today is focused on creating community. Examples: cell phones, blogs, IM, SMS, podcasting. It is all focused on connecting people across the world.

I have friends in Arkansas, Texas, Ireland, Guatemala that I can instantly keep in touch with because of technology.

That's why cell phone companies are racing to get cell phones into the hands of people all over the world. They realize 3/4 to 5/6 of the world's population will rely on their phone for most of their digital content.

What's the Biblical perspective?

Gal - you are called to be free, but use it to serve one another in love

Ep 4.2 - bearing with one another

Ep 4.32 - forgiving each other

Co 3.13 - bear and forgive

I The 5 - encourage and build each other up

He 3. - encourage

He 10 - spur one another

I John - love one another

There are 46 "one another" verses in the NT. How many of these can you do at one event? Maybe 2 or 3. This is an every day thing. Church is not coming and listening to someone speak and leave. Church is community. It's a circle of people that are tracking life with you.

Our dream is that every person is connected to someone else that is tracking life with them. We are always trying to connect people and make sure that they have someone to talk to and share life with.

## **[it's how others see God]**

The idea here is that this community of people loving and encouraging and forgiving each other would paint a picture for others of what God is like. God likes to show up in the form of other people. He puts flesh and blood on love. He puts flesh and blood on forgiveness. The goal is that we show others what God is like.

***Francis Schaeffer said, "Our relationship with each other is the criterion the world uses to judge whether our message is truthful – Christian community is the final apologetic."***

How many of you know someone who wants nothing to do with God because of how someone else has treated them. Our image of God is shaped by the people and the experiences around us.

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word father? For some it's good. For some it's not so good. There are all kinds of associations that are drug up because of people you know and experiences you have had.

It's important that as a Christian our interactions with non-Christians are marked by generosity and love. You have these endless opportunities to show others what God's love is like.

Community is not just for Christians. It's for all humans.

***“Create Community. Make a difference in someone’s day.”***  
*- Starbuck’s hiring advertisement*

Starbucks isn't just selling premium coffee. They're selling community. They're selling the environment or atmosphere where community happens. Starbucks believes that part of its corporate purpose is to create environments that connect people so meaningfully that it changes the quality of their lives.

We're not selling the gospel, we're creating communities and environments were people can see God.

What is Reality?

1. You may find community in Life Groups. You may not find community in Life Groups. Life Groups will not cure your need for community. It is an environment where it can happen more easily.
2. It won't happen overnight. Meaningful relationships take a long time to develop. A Bible study won't cause the fig leaves to drop. Sometimes, the church has a harder time dropping the fig leaves because of the expectations. “What if they judge me?”