

SERMON NOTES:



Oct 12, 2025

Practicing the Way
COMMUNITY 1.0

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The Struggle We All Know

- Many of us feel lonely or disconnected from God and other people in our modern world
- 26% of retired Australians report feeling profoundly alone.

God's Design for Relationship

- Genesis: God creates Adam, but says "It is not good for the man to be alone." (Gen 2:18).
- Humanity created in the image of the Triune God — Father, Son, and Spirit in eternal loving relationship (Gen 1:26 "Let us make mankind in our image").
- 1 John 4:7–8 "God is love." Love is defined by God's nature and flows from His relational being.
- Humanity reflects God's image through love shared with others — Adam and Eve's union declared "very good."
- Jesus' call in Matthew 5:48 - "Be perfect (teleios) as your heavenly Father is perfect" = be complete in love.

The End-Time Vision: Communion, Not Isolation

- Revelation 19:7–9 — the Wedding Feast of the Lamb shows the kingdom as a family gathered in joyful communion. God's vision is not a solitary throne room but a crowded family table.

Jesus' Relational Model of Discipleship

- Jesus calls people together (e.g., Simon and Andrew, then twelve disciples).
- Mark 3:14 — "He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach."
- Jesus redefines family (Mark 3:33–35): "Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Gentiles included — salvation brings adoption into God's family (Romans 8:15–17).
- Paul's language: "brothers and sisters" (adelphoi) over 100 times in his letters. Salvation is not just individual rescue but community creation.

Formation Happens in Community

- Jesus lived in relational "circles":
 - Intimates: Peter, James, John
 - Kin: the Twelve
 - Village: ~150 close followers
 - Tribe: the crowds of Israel
- We should also consider how we live with intentionality in these relational layers.

The Church as the Relational Alternative

- Acts 2:42 — “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.”
- Fellowship and shared meals are core practices, not optional extras.
- 1 Corinthians 11:33 — “When you come together to eat, wait for one another.”
- The Lord’s Supper began as an agape feast — a meal around a table.
- “Dining room Christianity” is powerful, not quaint.

Circles of Formation

- We need:
 - Intimates — who know and love us deeply (family/friends).
 - Kin group — small group of believers doing life together.
 - Village — church community.
 - Tribe — global body of Christ.
- Deepest formation happens in smaller circles — where confession, healing, and forgiveness occur.
- Without relational belonging, people may feel like outsiders and leave the church disillusioned.

Practical Invitation: “Set the Table”

- Formation is slow; community takes time.
- Don’t wait for perfect conditions. Begin where you are.
- Action step: start a regular shared meal — weekly, simple or fancy, at home or elsewhere.
- Practice presence, prayer, storytelling, and grace around the table.
- Jesus was often “going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal.”
- Community meals mirror the kingdom and shape discipleship.

The Warning of Unintentional Community

- Many churches offer groups, but few are intentional.
- Without belonging, people burn out or “try Christianity and find it didn’t work.”
- Lack of community = lack of formation.

The Call to Commitment

- “Be with Jesus, become like Jesus, do as He did.”
- Set the table and invite others in — this is where kingdom life is seen.
- Our “monastery” is the ordinary life we already live — the Spirit transforms us there.

Community Practice Recap Video:



Getting Practical Video:



Practicing the Way Podcast Interview Videos



For this practice, you might like to read:

Made to Belong: Five Practices For Cultivating Community in a Disconnected World

