

# SERMON NOTES:



Nov 2, 2025

Practicing the Way  
COMMUNITY 4.0

Pastor Mick Spann

## A Table in Corinth

- After Jesus' resurrection, small house churches gathered around tables (1st Century Corinth).
- Gaius hosted a community of "Followers of the Way."
- Men and women, slaves and free, foreigners and citizens shared one table — a revolution of love.
- They thought they were sharing dinner — but God was birthing the Church.
- That's the power of dining-room-table Christianity — ordinary people staying together to grow.

## A Messy Table

- Paul confronts the Corinthians: 1 Corinthians 3:1–3 — jealousy, quarrelling, spiritual immaturity.
- They had conflict, gossip, pride, lawsuits, and inequality — yet Paul tells them to grow up together, not split apart.
- The Church has always been messy — even in the New Testament.
- Growth only happens when we stay at the table instead of walking away.

## The "Wish Dream"

- When we love our dream of community more than the people in it, we destroy what we long for.
- Bonhoeffer (Life Together):  
*"The sooner the shock of disillusionment comes to an individual and to a community, the better for both."*
- Every idealized dream of community must die for real community to live.
- Parker J. Palmer:  
*"Community is that place where the person you least want to live with always lives."*
- God forms us into people of love through imperfect people.

## The Zone of Engagement

- The "zone of engagement" is where relationships get close enough to reveal our true selves.
- Vulnerable (Latin vulnerare) means "to wound."
- To love is to risk being hurt — but this is where transformation happens.
- Most people leave when relationships get hard, but growth comes when we stay.

## **The Cycle of Community**

1. Honeymoon — excitement, deep conversations, belonging.
  2. Apathy — things get routine, energy fades.
  3. Frustration — differences surface, conflict arises.
  4. Health — if we stay, forgive, and persevere, love deepens.
- People who stay, grow. People who leave, don't.

## **The Discipline of Staying**

- Ancient monks made a vow of stability — to stay, forgive, and grow in one community for life. “When you know you're going to die in a place, you take good care of it.”
- Modern culture makes everything disposable — but Jesus calls us to abide.
- Staying creates roots, depth, and beauty.

## **Abide, Walk, Shine**

- Jesus: “Abide in me, and I in you.” (John 15:4)
- Abide = to remain, to stay, to dwell in love.
- As we abide, we learn to walk with others who are also abiding in Him — through both joy and pain.
- When we walk and forgive and persevere together, we begin to shine.
- A community that stays becomes a lighthouse — steady, faithful, countercultural.
- Our vision: “Now is the time to be God's lighthouse.”

## **Three Skills for Staying**

1. Deal with Conflict — Matthew 18:15
  - “If your brother sins against you, go to him.”
  - Don't gossip or withdraw; seek reconciliation in love.
2. Forgive — Matthew 6:15
  - “If you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive yours.”
  - Forgiveness keeps community alive.
3. Commit to Keep Growing — Conversatio Morum (“conversion of life”)
  - Keep learning, repenting, and becoming like Jesus — together.

## **Taking the Next Small Step**

- Don't try to build utopia — just take one step closer.
  - Invite someone over for a meal.
  - Join or start a small group — and keep showing up.
  - Confess, forgive, pray, and stay.
- Ask: Who has God already placed in your life?
- Those are your people — love them, stay with them.

*"May the God who sets the solitary in families - make us into a family.*

*May He bind our hearts together in His love.*

*May He heal our wounds, grow us in courage, and form us into a people of joy and compassion.*

*May we confess our sins, carry each other's burdens, and celebrate His goodness around every table —  
until we feast at His table forever."*

*Amen.*

## **Community 4.0 Practice Recap Video and Reflection:**



## **Practicing the Way Podcast Interview Video COMMUNITY Part 3**



### **PART 4**



**For this practice, you  
might like to read:**

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

or

**When the Church Was a Family:  
Recapturing Jesus' Vision for  
Authentic Christian Community**

