

## **We Highly Value Genuine Community**

August 27, 2023

**Text:** Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25

### **The Root and Meaning of Christian Community**

- Christian community is rooted in \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- Christian community is developed by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Defining Christian community.

### **The Principles of Genuine Community**

- Community is a place that is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Community is a place where we \_\_\_\_\_ on each other.
- Community is a place where wisdom about how to live emerges from \_\_\_\_\_.
- Community is a place where we embrace the reality of " \_\_\_\_\_."
- *Genuine community develops as we meet together, share openly, pray fervently, love sincerely, receive and respond to biblical teaching, give and serve generously, and grow in trust toward God and each other.*

## **Life Enrichment**

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What about today's teaching challenged, disturbed, or encouraged you?

- Why do you think American's highly value individualism? How is our individualism expressed in daily living? When is that a good thing? When is it bad?
- Look at Genesis chapter one (especially verses 26-27). How was God living and working in community as the Trinity? What does that tell us about our nature as beings created in God's image?
- Considering Acts 2:42-47 immediately follows the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4), what do you think the Spirit's role was in shaping the new Christian community?
- In Acts 2:42-47, what stands out to you as the essence of community that the modern church needs to work on most? Why?
- Of the five "Principles of Genuine Community" mentioned in this week's teaching, which do you find easiest to live? Which is most difficult? Why?
- Why do you think serving together is one of the best ways to build community within a church? How have you experienced this?
- Spend some time in prayer. After listening to the Holy Spirit, list the ways He is leading you to participate in helping to build community at Maranatha.

## **Core Value 2**

## **We Highly Value Genuine Community**

Genuine community is the natural byproduct of being loved by God and loving Him fully in return. According to 1 John 4:8, 19, "God is love" and "we love each other/others because He first loved us." Since love's most fundamental quality is to seek the good of others, genuine community is other-centered, serving, sacrificial love found in relationships.

### **Key Points**

- Genuine community is a place that is profoundly safe.
  - A place where we learn to live with nothing hidden, daring to be open and vulnerable, knowing that we will be loved more, not less for it.
  - 1 John 1:7 "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another..."
- Genuine community is a place where we never give up on each other.
  - Protection always trumps accountability.
  - Shame is banished in the acknowledgment of who we are in Christ (Ro 8:1).
- Genuine community is a place where wisdom about how to live emerges from conversation (Lk 24:13-35).
- Genuine community is a place where we embrace the reality of "many hands."
  - We all matter. We all pitch in. We all contribute.
  - We all use our gifts and abilities to partner with God in His redemptive/reconciling work.
- Genuine community develops as we meet together, share openly, pray fervently, love sincerely, receive and respond to biblical teaching, give and serve generously, and grow in trust toward God and each other.

(Adapted from [www.godsleader.com/7-principles-on-authentic-community/](http://www.godsleader.com/7-principles-on-authentic-community/))

### **Key Scriptures**

- **Hebrews 10:24-25** - And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
- **1 Peter 4:8-11** - Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.
- **Acts 2:42-45** - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.
- **John 13:34-35** - A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.
- **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10** - Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.