



CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

A THOUGHT ON CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

Gone are the days of healthy, meaningful communities forming organically. With a sea of "Maybe" buttons on event invites and location pin drops for impromptu gatherings, it's easy to feel like we're constantly just a swipe or click away from connecting with others. But let's be real: those interactions formed through swipes and likes can feel shallow and unsatisfying and work pressures, loss of mobility, relationship breakdowns, health issues can easily become challenges to engaging in community. Even traditional communities formed through work, sports clubs, or group projects can turn toxic or become overwhelming to maintain.

The Bible offers a solution: a Christ-centred community that is actively cultivated and nurtured through God's people. This is a community that can rise above differences, extend forgiveness, and strive to make a deep, transformative impact on the world. No matter where we are, we can build good and beautiful communities by following Christ's lead.

Cultivating Christ-led communities for lasting change.

SOME KEY VERSES

Colossians 3:13

Ephesians 5:25-32

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Hebrews 10:24-25

SOME PASSAGES FOR
RELECTION & A
DEEPER DIVE

John 15

Ephesians 2:11-22

Colossians 3

Rom 15:1-13

Ephesians 4:1-16

1 Corinthians 12

TEACHING



Scan the QR code for further
resources



DO I HAVE COMMUNITY?

Before we explore cultivating community, it is important to understand our place in community and its impact on us. Here are a couple of questions to consider:

What communities am I a part of?

Do I believe the communities I'm involved with have an impact on me and the world? How so?

Do I believe being a part of a community makes a difference? If yes or no, why and how?

How invested am I into the health and purpose of this community? Is something holding me back? (past hurt, or fear, or time poor, etc).

What is one thing I could do to spiritually invest into the communities I'm involved in?

FOUR TIPS TO GET MORE COMMUNITY IN YOUR LIFE

Turn up: Get there

Participate: Use and find your gifts while participating with others and God

Share: Share your time, resources and self with others

Invite: Let others know



5. VALUES FOR LEADING A COMMUNITY

Inspired by Mike Breen's thoughts in his book "Family on Mission" and Priya Parker's "The Art of Gathering", here are four values/ingredients for gathering well and purposefully:

I. CONSCIOUS PURPOSE

In today's world, it's easy to take the idea of intention in gathering for granted, especially in the context of small groups or coffee meet-ups in a home. However, it's important to remember that our purpose - the truth, way, and life-giving reason we gather - is what makes our communities powerful. If you want to give your group the best chance of cultivating a strong, meaningful community, consider writing a purpose together. This can be a single line that gives your group a direction to strive and pray towards.

Some examples might include:

"We meet to grow in deeper relationship with God and each other"

"We meet to create a space for people to explore Jesus, who he is, what he said and did"

"We meet and discuss the weekly sermon, in hope of deepening our walk with God"

Knowing why you meet will give direction and boundaries for a healthy gathering.



5. VALUES FOR LEADING A COMMUNITY

2. PREDICTABLE PATTERNS

We all live busy and diverse lives. Some of us have children, some work night shifts, some travel for work, some are night owls, and some are early birds. That's why not every group has to be the same or meet at the same time, day, or place. However, it does need to be predictable. Don't leave your gathering up to chance or "just see what happens". Unpredictability is not inviting for anyone new, and it's hard to be formational without any form. Pick a regular, predictable rhythm for your gathering. Choose a time and day/month, set a couple of regular questions, and decide on a likely location. Give yourself the best chance to grow together.

3. CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clear definition of roles and responsibilities is crucial for the success of any gathering, whether it be a mentoring session, peer encouragement session, or a work meeting. Without a clear understanding of who is responsible for what, confusion and frustration can arise, leading to an ineffective and unproductive outcome. To ensure that gatherings run smoothly and achieve their desired results, it is important to establish and communicate clear roles and responsibilities to all participants.



5. VALUES FOR LEADING A COMMUNITY

4. INVITATION AND CHALLENGE

A gathering that incorporates both invitation and challenge can create a more meaningful and transformative experience for attendees. Invitation helps to create a sense of community and belonging, encouraging attendees to feel welcome and included. Challenge, on the other hand, encourages attendees to take risks and step outside of their comfort zone, fostering a sense of growth and accomplishment. This approach was modeled by Jesus in his discipleship, as he invited people to follow him and learn from him, while also challenging them to think deeply about their beliefs and actions and make changes in their lives. By combining both invitation and challenge, a gathering can create an environment that is both supportive and stimulating, fostering deeper connections and personal growth in attendees.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT

The fifth value is an integral aspect of a community centred around Jesus. Exploring His word offers the opportunity to deepen understanding and practice of Jesus' teachings in daily lives and in the community. It helps to see God's greater narrative and our place in it, and shapes the community's values. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus leaves with his followers, empowers and guides the community to live out these values. Through the Spirit, community members are encouraged to make decisions and take actions that align with Jesus' teachings and principles. Embracing this fifth value not only allows the community to function, but also thrive as a Jesus-centred community.



SMALL GROUPS

TREKING TOGETHER

These Practices can be journeyed with over whole seasons, but here is a guide for exploring this with a group over the month.

WEEK 1.

Here are some helpful questions to talk through for this practice.

Why are we going to meet? What's our purpose?

When are we going to meet and where? How regularly?

What might it look like when we meet? A Reading? A thought? A structure?

Who will host, prepare a thought? Print the practice guide? Bring some food? Suggest the coffee shop? Send a reminder text?

Is this limited to only 2 or 3 people or whom should we invite?

WEEK 2.

Create a [Rule of Life](https://transformationtrek.online) (Head to transformationtrek.online for the Rule of Life tool) for your group - This establishes the rhythms you hope to practice as a group to keep your community aligned with the values above and Christ-centred.

WEEK 3.

Encourage each member to create a rule of life - this establishes personal rhythms we keep each other accountable to as we become more like Jesus together.

WEEK 4.

Each person is challenged to invite or start praying for one person to attend the next small group gathering.

Cultivating Family Community

The family, designed by God, is a beautiful and life-giving community. The proximity, rhythms, and identity formed within a family shape our behaviour and purpose for the rest of our lives. In this season, we invite you to take this month to explore the recommended exercises found in this practice guide with your family. These exercises can bring new life and purpose to your family. By setting aside time this month to sit down with your partner and children and work through family habits and patterns, you can bring intentionality to your parenting and strengthen your marriage in a meaningful way. Here are a couple of creative suggestions.

1. Setting aside a specific day and time each week for a family meeting where everyone can share their thoughts and feelings, discuss any concerns, and make plans for the upcoming week.
2. Creating a chore schedule for each family member to share the responsibilities of maintaining the household.
3. Establishing a regular family meal time where everyone sits down together and enjoys a meal without distractions.
4. Encouraging daily family activities such as playing games, reading, or going for a walk together.
5. Creating a bedtime routine for everyone in the family to promote healthy sleep habits.
6. Dedicating a day of the week for family fun, such as going to the park, visiting a museum, or watching a movie together.
7. Setting aside time for individual family members to pursue their own interests, such as playing a musical instrument or pursuing a hobby.
8. Encourage family members to have a quiet time and reflect on their day or have a family prayer time.
9. Incorporating a gratitude practice, where everyone shares one thing they're grateful for each day.

A close-up photograph of several hands holding white ceramic mugs on a light-colored surface. The hands are positioned around the mugs, suggesting a shared activity like drinking or a conversation. The lighting is soft and natural, creating a warm and intimate atmosphere.

DISCIPLESHIP TOOL

THE 3 Rs

Here is a basic conversation tool you can use for your discipleship relationships. Using the 3 Rs you can be a disciple that makes disciples.

RELATIONSHIP

As Jesus invited the disciples to walk with Him so we invite others into our lives. Sharing our life with one another grows deep connections for lasting change, by living vulnerably and authentically with one another.

Suggested Qs: How has your week been? What has been a high and low moment in your life recently? Where have you seen God at work lately?

REALIGN

Transformation in our lives happens best when we align our lives with God's good and perfect will. To become like Jesus we need to realign our minds to the truth of the Bible and be shaped by the Holy Spirit. This could be through a book, verse, or trek practice.

Suggested Qs: What do you think God is saying to you in this moment? What does scripture say about this? What do you find challenging/encouraging from this passage?

Helpful tool: Jesus had 3 core relationships that he made a priority. (His relationship with God the Father, His community and those that are unsaved).

Q. Which relationship is God challenging you to make a priority at the moment?

RESPONSE

To be transformed we need to respond in obedience to Jesus' invitation to walk His way. We don't do this alone but can support one another through encouragement and prayer.

Suggested Qs: What are you going to do about what God is saying? What is your first step? How can we support and pray for each other?