

TALKING POINT #26
LIFE'S TURNING POINTS #6: CRISIS POINTS & CELEBRATION POINTS

IT'S ABOUT COMMUNITY

One of the big changes in our society has been the growth of the individual and decline of community, in reaction to which has been the extraordinary growth in phenomena like Facebook and chat rooms. As ever-increasing fences go up between houses, as work hours have become longer and as places for social interaction have decreased, people have spent less time in community.

However, God designed for us to be in community and the Church is the embodiment of this element of God's perfect design. In the Church, we are united as children of the Father, redeemed by the Son and joined by the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the community of the Church is a body connected to pursue the Great Commission but also to practice the Great Commandment as we walk life's journey.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

When God created Adam, He looked at this first human and said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2:18) Indeed, it was always God's intention that people be part of community. We were not designed to be hermits.

Being a community of God's people was God's intention for Israel and they were commanded to provide for each other and care for the poorest of the society. For example, God commands "Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God." (Leviticus 19:10).

When Jesus went to the Cross, His prayer for believers was, "that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us." (John 17:21) This is a most remarkable prayer because Jesus is asking that the very community of the Trinity be what binds the Church!

Finally, Paul gives the amazing image of the Church as a body and says, "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." (1 Corinthians 12:26).

NOW FOR US AT FOREST LAKE

As the "missional" movement has taken root in our Churches, we have been rightly focused on the need to be intentional in telling the World about the good news of Jesus Christ. But, one of the key ways we show Christ is to be a model community – what Stanley Hauerwas calls, "A Community of Character." That's why we rejoice when someone has good news and why we mourn with those who suffer. But, it's not just the job of the Pastoral Team or leadership – we all have a role to love each other, to sit with one who is suffering, to party with those who rejoice, to serve someone who needs help, to provide for those in need, to spend time with the lonely and to share Christ with one another. That's Church! That is the embodiment of our motto, "Every person is important to God."

CONCLUSION

The issue with this paper is not misunderstanding God's call for community but doing it. Pray that God shows you someone with whom you can share Christ and then go and do it!

In the 7th instalment of "Life's Turning Points", we'll look at "Church at Life's Final Turning Point."