

Practicing Jesus' Way: Community

"Regular fellowship and mutual submission to Jesus Christ"

Jesus' Way

Life Together.

Community is one of the most obvious features of Jesus' way of living. Early in his ministry, he gathered a group of disciples around him and they shared life together until the very end. Life together is simply Jesus' way. He could have set up a religious organization, but he didn't. He could have set up a religious program, but he didn't. He could have pursued his ministry alone, but he didn't. Jesus arranged his life around transformational relationships with the disciples; they participated in Jesus' redemptive mission alongside him.

Embracing Jesus' Way

Fellowship.

Ultimately, community means being *together*. That was Jesus' way. *Proximity, frequency and regularity* are all important so that life is experienced *together* in all its joys and challenges. This way, we can support and encourage each other as all of life is brought into the context of following Jesus and practicing Jesus' Way *together*.

Commitment.

Practicing community requires a commitment to be *with* others on a regular basis and to *support and encourage* their life in Jesus Christ. While community is extremely rewarding, it can sometimes be inconvenient, frustrating, and exhausting. In such times, we don't second guess Jesus' way. We are committed to it. So we are committed to each other.

Mutual Submission.

Community includes openness to God's work and direction that comes to us *through each other* as we *mutually submit* ourselves to Jesus. There is give and take. We stand in the gap for each other and hold to Jesus' agenda for us rather than our own. We put ourselves on the line for each other that we might all grow in Christlikeness.

Getting Started.

- Think about the people God has put in your life with whom you might *mutually submit* to Jesus.
- Prayerfully consider and seek out those with whom you could regularly fellowship.
- Commit to each other, to life together, to regular fellowship, and to mutual submission to Jesus.

Keys to remember:

- Jesus' way of life and ministry was community.
- One of Jesus' final prayers for us was unity in community (John 17).
- By God's design, we are unique and complementary. Together, we are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12)