

Romans 12:3-18, John 15:9-14

KINGDOM COME: Community

Message by Pastor Jonathan Riddle

Kingdom Come: Community – August 2023

“Princeton’s Robert Wuthnow has found that small groups mainly ‘provide occasions for individuals to focus on themselves in the presence of others. The social contract binding members together asserts only the weakest of obligations. Come if you have time. Talk if you feel like it. Respect everyone’s opinion. Never criticize. Leave quietly if you become dissatisfied.’

In *Overcoming Loneliness in Everyday Life*, two Boston psychiatrists ... suggest that ... groups fail to replicate the sense of belonging we have lost. Attending weekly meetings, dropping in and out as one pleases, shopping around for a more satisfactory or appealing group—all of these factors work against the growth of true community.

Christians expect to find community by attending church services and coming to a small group. As the quote above points out, however, it is possible to hold a weekly small group meeting without adding the elements that create real community. Because of our idols and the habits of our heart, church events simply become places that individuals “focus on themselves in the presence of others.” It takes deep rejection and costly commitment to live in community.

Read Romans 12:9-18, Hebrews 12:14-24, Mark 3:31-35

1. Our culture is more connected than ever and yet we feel more lonely. Why do so many feel such a lack of community?

2. Pastor Riddle mentioned of the four kinds love and specifically “Storge” or Familial love. How and why is love for family different than other forms of love?

3. In Romans 12:14-18, Paul writes at length how Christians should ‘Bless’ and ‘Pray’ for those who persecute you. Do you feel as a Christian you are gracious to those who disagree or oppose you?

4. What steps do you need to take to get involved with a spiritual community that can grow your faith and create a spiritual family?

