

Community vs Freedom

Start Here - 5 minutes

The Bible is a metanarrative, a collection of writings that tell a larger story that points to Jesus. Throughout this epic story are many teachings from Jesus, Paul, James, Peter, and other apostles and prophets and the main theme of these teachings is how to live in right relationship **with God and with other people**.

We see this displayed in both 1 Peter & 1 Corinthians. Have a couple of volunteers from the group read the passages below.

1 Peter 4:8-10

Above all, show sincere love to each other, because love brings about the forgiveness of many sins.

Open your homes to each other without complaining. And serve each other according to the gift each person has received, as good managers of God's diverse gifts.

1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Jesus often refers to and teaches about the Kingdom of Heaven and there is a strong sense that for Jesus, the Kingdom of heaven has everything to do with people living together in **loving & healthy communities**.

There are two very common definitions of community. The first definition is *a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common*.

The second definition is *a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals*.

David Brooks, award-winning journalist and author of the New York Times bestselling book "Tribe" claims that there are two main American ideals that everyone seeks after—freedom and community. These two ideals are intrinsically at odds with each other. It was no different during the life of Jesus. In fact, Paul addresses the dichotomy between community and freedom to the church in Galatia. In Galatians 5v13&14 Paul says, "You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only don't let this freedom be an opportunity

to indulge your selfish impulses, but serve each other through love. All the Law has been fulfilled in a single statement: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Questions - 30 minutes

Do you feel the need to be a part of a community?

If yes, is that need being met? Give examples or how it is or isn't.

Were you raised in a family that valued community? Give examples.

How do you see the tension between freedom & community playing out in the world or your personal life?

Talk about some societal constructs you see that interfere with your (or others) ability to find community?

(Examples include fast food, movie theatres, social media, hobbies, etc.)

What are some personal characteristics that you see interfering with your ability to find community?

(Examples include busy schedules, fear, life circumstances, etc.)

Close in Prayer - 10 minutes

Take some time to share what is going on in everyone's life and how the group can encourage and support one another. Have someone close in prayer.