

# Community vs Tribalism

## Start Here - 5 minutes

We have been exploring the idea of community and how important it is to human flourishing. At the core of every person is a desire to belong to a group of people that know and support each other, to be a part of a community where we feel safe, where we can be ourselves, ask questions, express doubt, and grow.

Doesn't that sound great?!?

So why is it so difficult for most of us to find a loving and healthy community like that? Acclaimed American writer and law professor Amy Chua has a theory. She believes one of the main reasons healthy communities in America are hard to find has to do with community's dark side—Tribalism. Amy argues that dividing ourselves up into tribes rather than developing communities is a deeply human instinct. Whether on the football field or the battlefield, in the voting booth or courthouse, it's often tribal identity that drives human behavior.

So, what's the difference between communities and tribes?

**Tribes** are exclusionary and fight against diversity. They recognize their own members' similarities and generally see outsiders as enemies at worst and inferiors at best. In contrast, **communities** are inclusionary and celebrate unity *and* diversity. Community is characterized by common attitudes, interests, and goals. Religion, politics, beliefs, and opinions can differ starkly in community and actually add vibrancy and color, allowing for continued experimentation and growth. Communities don't hold long-term animosities against other communities, and those within them shift in opinion as time goes by and learning occurs. Tribes seek to overpower and eliminate other tribes. Tribes are fueled by fear while communities are guided by love.

In short, Tribes are known by what they are against and communities are known by what they are for.

**As a group, read Acts 15:1-21 - 5 minutes**

### **Questions - 30 minutes**

Regarding Acts 15:1-21

1. What examples of tribalism do you see in this passage?
2. What attempts for community do you see in this passage?
3. First, read Acts 10:9-16. Now place yourself in the shoes (or sandals) of Peter and read Acts 15:7-11. What do you notice about this passage as it pertains to tribalism and community?

Have you been or are you currently a part of a **tribe**? This can be an intentional or unintentional.

If you are currently a part of a **community**, what can you do to help ensure it doesn't turn into a tribe?

### **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.