

How do we practice community when people of different cultures, ethnic and racial backgrounds view “community” differently?

Given by Grace

IN TRUE COMMUNITY we will not choose our companions, for our choices are so often limited by self-serving motives. Instead, our companions will be given to us by grace. Often they will be persons who will upset our settled view of self and world. In fact, we might define true community as that place where the person you least want to live with lives! . . .

Community reminds us that we are called to love, for community is a product of love in action and not of simple self-interest. Community can break our egos open to the experience of a God who cannot be contained by our conceptions. Community will teach us that our grip on truth is fragile and incomplete, that we need many ears to hear the fullness of God’s word for our lives. And the disappointments of community life can be transformed by our discovery that the only dependable power for life lies beyond all human structures and relationships.

In this religious grounding lies the only real hedge against the risk of disappointment in seeking community. That risk can be borne only if it is not community one seeks, but truth, light, God. Do not commit yourself to community, but commit yourself to God. . . . In that commitment you will find yourself drawn into community.

—Parker Palmer

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Being the Church

THE CHURCH OF GOD has to be the salt and light of the world. We are the hope of the hopeless, through the power of God. We must transfigure a situation of hate and suspicion, of brokenness and separation, of fear and bitterness. We have no option. We are servants of the God who reigns and cares. He wants us to be the alternative society; where there is harshness and insensitivity, we must be compassionate and caring; where people are statistics, we must show they count as being of immense value to God; where there is grasping and selfishness, we must be a sharing community now.

In the early church people were attracted to it not so much by the preaching, but by the fact that they saw Christians as a community, living a new life as if what God had done was important, and had made a difference. They saw a community of those who, whether poor or rich, male or female, free or slave, young or old—all quite unbelievably loved and cared for each other. It was the lifestyle of the Christians that was witnessing. —Desmond Tutu

“BEING THE CHURCH” BY DESMOND TUTU FROM *CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS*, EDITED BY JOHN WEBSTER, 1990. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF THE CONTINUUM INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING GROUP.

*How does your church impact
the wider community through caring
for one another?*



NOT AT HOME

Is the majority of your congregation culturally, racially, or economically similar? If the answer is yes, have members of your group commit to worshipping one time this month in a church community where you will not feel socially at home. Come together and share what the experience was like. What is it like to be a stranger in a group? How does God meet us when we are not “at home”? How can your own church become more diverse?