

R/SF

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Authentic Community

Genesis 2 & Acts 2

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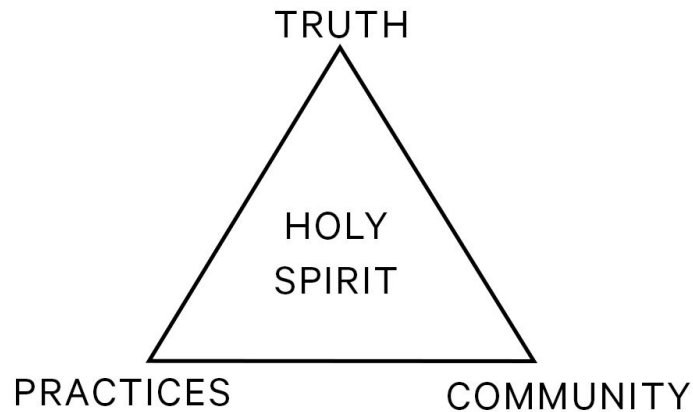
Genesis 2:15-18

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

“Spiritual formation occurs primarily in the context of community. People who remain connected with their brothers and sisters in the local church almost invariably grow in self-understanding, and they mature in their ability to relate in healthy ways to God and to their fellow human beings. This is especially the case for those courageous Christians who stick it out through the often messy process of interpersonal discord and conflict resolution. Long-term interpersonal relationships are the crucible of genuine progress in the Christian life. People who stay also grow. People who leave do not grow.”

- Joseph Hellerman, *When the Church was a Family*

Triangle of Transformation (A Theory of Change)



Genesis 1:18

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

“We are lonely but fearful of intimacy. Digital connections ...may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other even as we are tethered to each other. We would rather text than talk...But when technology engineers intimacy, relationships can be reduced to mere connections. And then, easy connection becomes redefined as intimacy. Put otherwise, cyber-intimacies slide into cyber-solitudes. And with constant connection comes new anxieties of disconnection, a kind of panic.”

- Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*

Genesis 1:18

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.”

We are created and hardwired for community.

“The myth surrounding vulnerability is ‘I can go it alone.’ One line of defense that I encounter is ‘I don’t need to be vulnerable because I don’t need anyone.’ I’m with you. Some days I wish it were true. The problem, however, is that needing no one pushes against everything we know about human neurobiology. We are hardwired for connection. From our mirror neurons to language, we are social species. In the absence of authentic connection, we suffer.”

- Brene Brown, *Dare to Lead*

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...”

Acts 2:41

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed

by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

“We vow to remain all our life with our local community. We live together, pray together, work together, relax together. We give up the temptation to move from place to place in search of an ideal situation. Ultimately there is no escape from oneself, and the idea that things would be better someplace else is usually an illusion. And when interpersonal conflicts arise, we have a great incentive to work things out and restore peace. This means learning the practices of love: acknowledging one’s own offensive behavior, giving up one’s preferences, forgiving.”

- *Vow of Stability from Our Lady of the Mississippi Abbey*

“Community is constituted by physical proximity, shared concerns, real consequences, and common responsibilities.”

- Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together*