



Gathered Rhythm

Living together for Mission

THICK COMMUNITY: GATHERED RHYTHM

In looking at our personal rhythms¹ of intentional communion with God, community with one another and commission in our personal spheres of influence, we also are a part of a gathered rhythm of communion, community and commission. Simply put, we practice a gathered rhythm together through our commitment in MKAO. But, what is a gathered rhythm supposed to do in our personal lives and the life of our community? Does it help to shape a community that is beautiful and hopeful to the world around us? Does it help us to become a community worth inviting into?

John 15:12-17 ESV

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another."

Jesus' words to His disciples in his last days. He talks to them mainly about love, and loving one another, and He banked His whole life and death and resurrection on this: that His people would be marked by a self-giving love that will change the whole culture around them. He defined love for us; he defined relationships for us; he defined purpose for us. Love lays down his/her life for others. Relationships aren't about performance but about intimacy and friendship. And purpose is about abiding in Jesus and therefore bearing fruit. For the flourishing of community and culture within and around us.

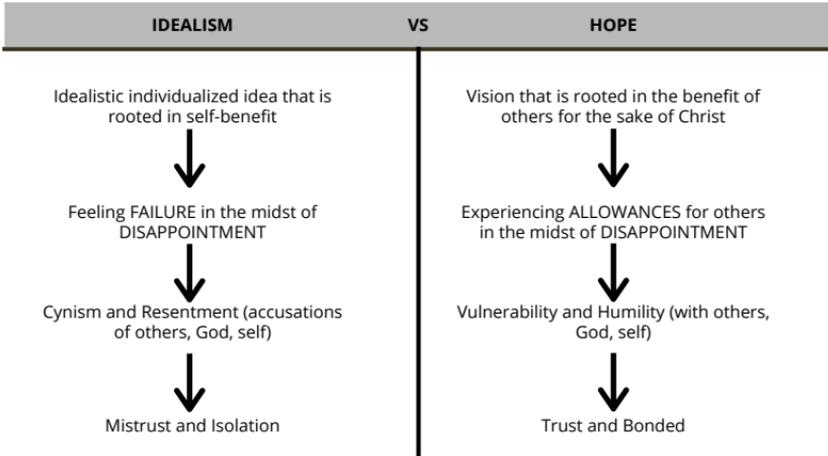
"The best testimony to the truth of the gospel is the quality of our life together. Jesus risked his reputation and the credibility of his story by tying them to how his followers live and care for one another in community ... Communities in which we grow and flourish last over time and are built by people who are faithful to one another and committed to a shared purpose. Community life certainly has moments of incredible beauty and intense personal connection, but much of it is daily and ordinary. Our lives are knit together not so much by intense feeling as by shared history, tasks, commitments, stories, and sacrifices." [C. Pohl]

"He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial ... When his ideal picture is destroyed, he sees the community going to smash. So he becomes, first an accuser of his [brothers and sisters], then an accuser of God, and finally the despairing accuser of (him/herself)." [D. Bonhoeffer]

¹Since gathered rhythm must go hand in hand with personal rhythm, please refer to *Personal Rhythm* under Kingdom Partnership (page 100)

Jesus banked on His followers to live together in His way for the renewal of the culture around them. Through self-giving love. And community like this happens in two ways:

1. in the ordinary (shared history, tasks, commitments, stories and sacrifices)
2. in giving up our own idealism about what community is supposed to be like



How do we practice intentional community in MKAO?

In what ways is our community worth inviting into?

How do we show commitment and shared purpose with one another (ie shared history, tasks, commitments, stories and sacrifices)? In what ways can we grow in this?

How do our ideal pictures of community threaten our commitment and shared purpose with one another (ie. ideal expectations of relationships, purpose, feelings, etc)? In what ways do we accuse others, accuse God, and despairingly accuse ourselves?