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OUR NEED FOR COMMUNITY

Fulfilling Jesus' Prayer

²⁰ "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹ *I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one*—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. ²² *I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.* ²³ I am in them and you are in me. *May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.*" **John 17:20-23 NLT**

It is not "your" purpose, it's God's purpose.

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but *through love serve one another.* ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" **Galatians 5:13-14 ESV**

Community makes the body grow!

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, *we are to grow up in every way into him* who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, *joined and held together* by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, *makes the body grow* so that it builds itself up in love. **Ephesians 4:15-16 ESV**

Community facilitates mutual support!

- ⁴⁴ *And all who believed were together and had all things in common.* ⁴⁵ *And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.* ⁴⁶ *And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,* ⁴⁷ praising God and *having favor with all the people.* And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. **Acts 2:44-47 ESV**
- ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. **Galatians 6:2 NIV**

Community encourages and stirs one another!

²⁴ *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,* ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. **Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV**

We belong to Jesus and to one another.

- ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and *each member belongs to all the others.* **Romans 12:4-5 NIV**
- ²⁰ *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* **Galatians 2:20 NIV**

When you aren't convinced of God's purpose, you'll excuse it, or make excuses to not fulfill it.

Don't let the enemy's lies separate you from the flock.

⁸ *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* **1 Peter 5:8 ESV**

Possible reasons the enemy uses to keep us from community:

- I don't know the Bible well enough / I'm an introvert / I'm not comfortable around strangers / I don't have time / I'm afraid a question will be asked that I can't answer / I don't have anyone to watch my kids during the meeting / I'm not comfortable talking or praying aloud / I don't understand the terms other Christians already know / My spouse won't go with me

Next Steps:

- **Pray: Ask God to lead you**
- **Join a Life Group**
- **Attend faithfully**