



# THE ABUNDANT, COMMUNAL LIFE

What does it mean to have a full life as a Christian? Some think you must give up everything - like becoming a monk - and focus solely on ministry. And there is a solid argument for that - life is short, eternity is what matters most. Shouldn't we spend all our time helping people find God?

Yet even Jesus, who had the most important mission and three short years to do it, didn't spend all his time preaching or healing. Take the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11). When asked to perform a miracle, Jesus didn't seem eager to do it. Why was he there? Perhaps simply to celebrate a couple's new beginning and to enjoy time with friends and family.

Later Jesus joined a new convert for a 'great banquet' (Luke 5:27-29). In fact, Jesus had so many meals with "sinners" his critics accused him of being a glutton and a drunkard (Luke 7:34).

This joyful, communal way of living didn't stop with Jesus. After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the first Christians continued to share life together. They devoted themselves to fellowship, shared everything in common, and regularly ate together in each others' homes (Acts 2:42-46).

## **Why Do We Need Community?**

We were made for joy and connection. Our best moments usually happen with others. In fact, research consistently shows that close relationships are the single biggest predictor of happiness and health—even more than exercise or income. But God said it first:

- Two are better than one. If either falls, one can help the other up. (Ecc 4:9-10)
- Do not give up meeting together... but encourage one another. (Heb 10:24-25)
- Rejoice with those who rejoice. Carry each other's burdens. (Rom 12:15, Gal 6:2)

## **So How Do We Foster Deeper Friendships?**

Community doesn't usually form by accident. It requires intention, patience, and humility. Here are a few simple (but challenging) steps:

- **Be a friend first.** Don't wait for others to reach out—initiate.
- **Be intentional.** Schedule time. Create space. Make it a priority.
- **Show up in the hard times.** Sit with friends in their grief and confusion.
- **Show up in the good times.** Celebrate birthdays, promotions, babies, engagements.
- **Be honest and vulnerable—but not all the time.** Deep friendship includes laughter, joy, and shared silliness. Make room for fun.

Jesus didn't just come to save us from sin. He came to give us an abundant life (John 10:10). A full life in Christ is not a narrow life—it is wide and rich and beautifully interconnected.

Let us pursue that kind of life together.



*Reflection*

**JULY**

## *The Abundant, Communal Life*

1. How do the images above - of Jesus celebrating at a wedding and relaxing around the dinner table with friends - compare to the image most people have of Jesus? Why do you think eating with others was such a central part of Jesus' ministry (Matthew 9:10-13, Luke 7:36, Luke 19:1-10, Matthew 26:20, John 21:12)?

2. What comes to mind when you picture Jesus eating, drinking, and laughing with friends?

How might your view of the "Christian life" need to expand to include celebration and fun?

3. When have you experienced deep joy in your life? Who was with you? What made that moment meaningful?

4. Read Proverbs 17:22 and Ecclesiastes 3:1-4. How do these verses relate to having a full life? How do they compare to common views of Christianity?

5. Read Acts 2:42-46.  
How does your experience of Christianity compare to the early church?

Why do you think the church today is so far away from this?

What's one step your church (or you personally) could take to live more like this?

6. In order to say “yes” to the type of community demonstrated by Jesus and the early church, we have to say “no” to much of the busyness and distraction that consumes our modern lives.

What would this look like in your context?

What are the cultural pressures that make it hard to pursue community?