

A FEW POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. There is an old saying that goes, “Anytime someone attempts to explain the Trinity, they commit heresy.” That saying reminds us that this fundamental Christian doctrine is a mystery beyond our ability to fully comprehend. It is the Church’s best attempt to articulate the way the Scripture talks about the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It’s OK if people have questions or have a hard time understanding it, or if you’re not entirely sure how to answer the groups questions about it.
2. As the group discusses the merits connection and the notion of “staying together,” It may be good for you to affirm the fact that relationships can be complicated and nuanced. It is also healthy to have good boundaries with the people in our lives. The book *Boundaries* by Cloud and Townsend would be helpful for anyone looking to establish healthy boundaries in their life.
3. “People who stay grow. People who leave do not grow. It is a simple but profound biblical reality that we both grow and thrive together or we do not grow much at all.” - Christopher Smith and John Pattison, *Slow Church*

THREE REASONS WE AVOID COMMUNITY

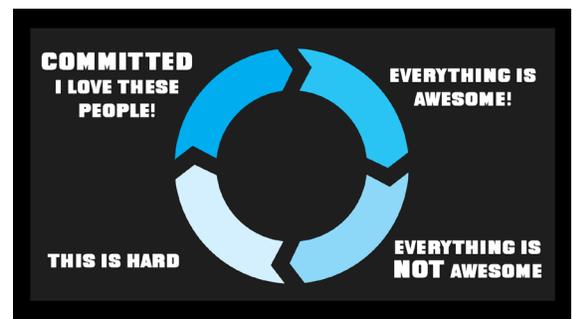
Individualism - We want to live life our own way and keep our options open. Living in community says, you have to give up – not all, but some – of your autonomy. You have to come under the accountability of other people. To live in a community in the way of Jesus, you have to commit, which means you sometimes miss out on other options. You can’t just do whatever you want, whenever you want.

Idealism - Sometimes we don’t have realistic expectations. Marriage is a good example of this. Many marriages fail because of wildly unrealistic expectations. Sometimes we won’t commit to a community because we are waiting around for the perfect fit, or we bounce from one community to another looking for the perfect community.

Intimidation - We’re might be scared of community regardless of whether or not we consider ourselves introverts or extroverts. Introversions and extroversions have nothing to do with how relational somebody is. We’re scared, because we realize, even if only at an intuitive, gut level, if we really commit to a community, our real self will come out. Who we actually are will come out in the open before God and each other.

The “One Anothers” in the Bible:

- “Be at peace with each other.” (Mark 9:50)
- “Wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14)
- “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love...” (Romans 12:10)
- “Live in harmony with one another...” (Romans 12:16)
- “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you...” (Romans 15:7)
- “Instruct one another.” (Romans 15:14)
- “Serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13)
- “Be patient, bearing with one another in love.” (Ephesians 4:2)
- “Be kind and compassionate to one another...” (Ephesians 4:32)
- “Spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” (Hebrews 10:24)
- “Live in harmony with one another...” (I Peter 3:8)



Stages of “Staying Together”