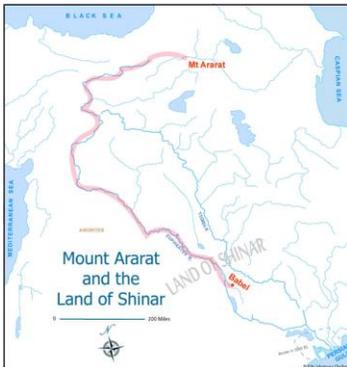


COMMUNITY

Part 3

The Power of Community



Gen 11:1-9

11 Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

NKJV

6 And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.

God understood the power of community in the sons of men.

- The sons of men shared the same mission
- The sons of men shared the same method
- The sons of men shared the same man power

This included their material resources

He said that nothing man proposed to do would be withheld from them.

God knew man and knew what was wrong in the heart of man. They sought to make a name for themselves. They sought to insulate themselves from destruction. This would not serve the divine purposes of God. So God came up with a way to scatter them. They would no longer speak the same language.

When God has a mission for His people, He unites people to perform that mission.

Because God understood the power of community Jesus created His church.

[Matt 16:18-19](#)

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

NKJV

[In order to experience the power of community in the church.....](#)

- [We must share the same mission](#)

The mission of the church is to make disciples. (Matthew 4:19; Mathew 28:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:2).

We provide benevolence but we do not exist to do benevolence. We care for the sick but we do not exist to visit the sick. We work together to serve people but we do not exist to serve people. We provide opportunities for fellowship but we do not exist to provide fellowship.

We exist to make disciples. That is our mission. To experience the power of community we must share the same mission. We must remain faithful to our mission.

- [We must share the same method](#)

The essential method that Jesus chose for His church to make disciples was meeting in small groups. He modeled this for the church and after Pentecost the apostles led the church to follow His model. (Acts 2:46; Romans 16:5).

Meeting in small groups was the engine that drove the church to fulfill its mission.

When they met together their meetings were characterized by group participation. (1 Cor. 14).

1 Cor. 14:26

26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

NKJV



When small groups in the church met and allowed for group participation around the Word of God, each believer had the opportunity to be disciplined by all the other members of the group and each believer had the opportunity to disciple all the other members of the group.

If an unbeliever entered the meeting and the group functioned the way it was designed to function the unbeliever would be convicted by all. (I Cor. 14:24-25).

The apostle Peter called a believer a living stone.

1 Peter 2:4-5

4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

NKJV

Our small group meetings are structured in a way that everyone can be living stones.

Jesus never intended for His followers in the church to learn to follow Him by following one person.

The Lord uses apostles, pastors, teachers, prophets, and evangelists in discipleship. (Eph. 4:11-12). He uses one to one discipleship.

But discipleship is most effective when it is done as a team in a small group.

Jesus said where two or three are gathered together in His name there He is in the midst of them. (Matthew 18:20). Paul said each believer is a member of His body. (Eph. 5:30).

Discipleship is a team sport!

Jesus said....

Matt 16:18

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

NKJV

The church should win. To win the church must be His church following His ways. To be His church, discipleship must become a team sport.

To follow the same method we must share the same language.

There is a lot of confusing about discipleship in the church because we do not all share the same language. Our understanding of words is based on our underlying beliefs and assumptions. What church means to me may not be the same as what church means to you. What disciple means to me

may not be the same as what disciple means to you. What discipleship means to me may not be the same as what discipleship means to you. If we do not speak the same language we cannot pull together in the same direction. This is one of the reasons we have classes.

I want to urge you to seek clarification before you judge what you're hearing.

Some of you are resisting the method because of your underlying beliefs and assumptions about discipleship and the way it should be done. You think that you have a better way of doing it because of your past experiences.

The essential aspects of the plan we are using for small groups is as old as Jesus, His disciples, and the early church. It has been proven over 2000 years. It has been proven recently at Real Life Ministries in Post Falls Idaho. We are not using something new. We have rediscovered something old. It is relational and it is reproducible.

I would urge you to find a small group in our church that is actually using our method, start actively participating, and give it a couple of years before you conclude you have a better way of doing it.

To experience the power of community we must share the same method.

- **We must share the same man power**

To build the tower of babel the sons of men joined in the work together.

Also, the design, the ovens, the bricks, and the mortar cost all the people who were committed to build that tower. Because they shared the same mission and the same method, they gave freely and generously. Each person had a part in sharing the support.

The apostle Paul called upon each person in the church to join in the work of making disciples.

He also called upon them to join in giving to the work.

He called upon the church at Corinth to give the first of their income and to give generously to support the building of His church and the fulfillment of His mission.

1 Cor. 16:2

2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.
NKJV

This first of your income principle was an Old Testament principle that the apostles carried over into the church.

I recently asked God how He felt about a government that required its citizens to give the first fruits of our income to it. This was not always the case in our nation. This was not the case until after 1900.

The truth is the majority of church members were not giving it to Him anyway. Could it be that the income tax was a judgment on His people in our nation?

If God's people will obey God's Word in giving, I believe God will open up the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing on His church that His church will not be able to contain.

To have community and share the same mission, method, and man power, we must follow the same leadership. God works through His leaders to provide direction to His people.

But different leaders use different methods to accomplish the same mission. Last week Life Church celebrated its 20th anniversary. The church began in a garage with about 40 people. Currently the church has 24 different locations in seven different states. 70000 people are attending Life Church each week. They have church online that requires 600 volunteers to manage. 5 million computers interacted with church online in 2015. They have a bible app that has been downloaded over 200 million times.

Their success shows the power of community. They share...

- The same mission
- The same method
- The same man power

You need to follow the leader and his method that God is calling you to follow.

I am amazed and humbled when people believe that God is calling them to follow my leadership.

I am very disappointed when people believe that God is calling them to follow another Pastor. It is hard not to take it personally. It almost always effectively ends our relationship. But I do understand.

In my tenure of over 30 years as the senior Pastor at WHC our mission has always been the same. But as the senior Pastor I have changed our methods a number of times. I have tried to change certain methods as the world has changed.

But I have always sought to imitate what was done in the early church as far as it depends on me. This has been an incredible learning experience filled with self-doubt.

I believe that what I am seeing happen in some of our small groups right now and what I am personally experiencing is the closest thing that I have ever seen to what occurred in the early church.

I believe that if we will be His church, the gates of hell will not prevail.

This morning, if you believe that God is calling you to follow my leadership, for the sake of community, I want to ask you to commit yourself...

To share our mission

To share our method

To share your man power

If you are not a disciple of Jesus Christ, I want to invite you to become one today. Receive Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and follow Him.