

Mission Impossible

Communities all over the world are falling apart, and so they have that big conference for everybody to come and contribute in hope that those communities can survive. Communalism, contribution, survival — they are trying to find out how communities can survive.

Why do we live in community? We live in community for an entirely different reason than they. It is very difficult to write an article because it becomes a teaching for us, but they cannot grasp it. We are leaning toward the religious section of this conference. There are secular and religious people coming to this conference. We can relate to the religious people because we have the same Bible and maybe we can show them where they are off.

There is a session about why we live in community. We cannot contribute to their success. The only valid community is the community of Yahshua. He is the originator of community. The first communities in the world were founded in that area of the world.

Why do we live in community? We live in community for an entirely different reason than they do. We live in community through no choice of our own, certainly not because of an intentional community mentality.

Intentional — people go to a place intentionally, purposely to start a community. Many lonely people seek out community. God makes a home for the lonely, but it's God. Hardly can they make a home for themselves.

Community cannot be made up just of people who are lonely and they just want a place together. They cannot live in peace. It ends up in destruction. You have to have the Prince of Peace as the head of the community and He gives His peace to everybody in the community.

It is impossible not to live in community if you obey the word of God. You cannot help but live in community if you want to obey Yahshua. Obedience to His word leads to community and if we continue to obey His word the community continues. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The community is formed through obeying the word and it perpetuates itself through obeying the word. 100 times we will have to answer to outsiders what our Master was talking about when He said that the gates of hell will not prevail against His community. Christians think that only Christianity is the true church based on Mt 16:18. As long as it is His community, He will sustain it. There are so many illustrations in the Old Covenant that when Israel was disobedient he would give them over to the enemy. They would be bequeathed to the enemy. Christianity was given over to the enemy.

When I was saved and started following Yahshua I didn't have a concept of community. We started out obeying our Master. When we talked to people about our Master they didn't have any place to go. Love demands taking care of one another. It has to be a lifestyle. It compels you to live together. To encourage one another daily you have to live together. We got a house and all the people that were saved moved into it of course, and started living together. They started leaving their parents, jobs, schools, etc. Of course they wanted to be with their brothers and sisters (Mk 3:33; 1 Jn 3:14,16,23).

We are in the Intentional Community Directory, and as far as people could see, we were aligning ourselves with these intentional communities. So we wrote a new entry — made it longer and put the gospel in. I want people to be attracted to us because of the gospel and not just because they want to live in community. 2 Cor 2:15-16 — The gospel either repels or attracts. To be the gospel it has to be one or the other. That is the only way community can survive.

We had no intention for such a drastic change in lifestyle. We wanted to follow our Master Yahshua. We were a community before we even knew about Acts 2 and 4.

There were two things that repelled people in the beginning. They were repelled through the gospel and through putting them to work. Even the "layabouts" would come to us wanting shelter. But the next day they had to get up and go to work or they wouldn't eat. They didn't stay. Not one insincere person stayed for long. Everybody has to be productive. That's why we cannot take our parents in. They have to obey the gospel and be productive. The community is only for those who have the Holy Spirit. If a husband or wife comes who is not a believer we always let them stay but they have to be very productive. Then a lot of people won't stay because they have to really apply themselves.

Our Master said Jn 14:15. The decline of the first church was due to a lack of love. They weren't loving like at first. Community is based on love, laying down our lives for each other. The first church fell — "The Rise and Fall of the First Church." "If you love Me you will keep my commandment to love one another." Community is set up and maintained by the Jn 13:34 kind of love. If there is not this kind of love — that *agape, ahavah* — community cannot be. God is love, and where love is, there is God.

Community is established by obeying the commandments of God. Community is maintained by obeying His commandments. As long as His commandments are obeyed the lampstand remains in its place. In Rev 2 it talks about the taking away of the lampstand. That was the end of the community. Go to Ephesus today. There is no church there today.

The picture is getting clearer and clearer. There will be a great and mighty voice (Rev 18:1). Many people's mind will be illuminated through the gospel, not only in Christianity but also in the whole world. It is going to be simple, not complicated. People will be able to understand it.

Community is set up by obedience to the word of God and it is maintained by obedience to the word of God. Once you stop obeying — quit loving, community will self-destruct in three minutes. How can you stay in community if you don't love each other?

[See also February 6, 1994, Evening Sacrifice, Sus House, Boston: "Obedience Necessitates Community: (940206).]