

Are You Caring for Your Community or Just Consuming From It?

In the summer of 2010, Kaye and I were on vacation in New York City and we attended services at Redeemer Presbyterian church. Before the sermon, a young man stood in front of the congregation and prayed to the Lord on behalf of the whole congregation. He prayed specifically for the city they lived in and he prayed that the Lord would help the church not to “use the city” but to “serve the city,” that they would be a people who would “contribute to the city” and not only “consume from the city.” The language revealed the heart of the church and it was challenging to me. As tourists, we were there in NYC to consume from NYC. We were there to watch plays, eat from great restaurants, and enjoy adventures NYC offers. It was our vacation and not our home, so our consumption was the point of the trip, but the prayer increased my conviction for how I should live in the community the Lord has placed me.

Here are three thoughts on caring for your community and not merely consuming from it.

1. Our posture should be one of caring and not consumption.

The Lord has determined the time and place where we live (Acts 17:26). Of all the times we could be living and all the places of the world we could live, the Lord has placed us right where we are. We are to represent Him as ambassadors of His Kingdom (II Corinthians 5:20) and we are to be salt and light where we live (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt both preserves and adds flavor. Rather than merely consuming from our community, we are to contribute to our community. We are to preserve it and add flavor to it – make it better. Christians should make their workplaces better not worse, their neighborhoods better not worse, and their cities better not worse. As believers in Christ, we must care for our communities not merely consume the good things from them.

2. Caring, not consuming, is what causes us to love where we live.

Living as a tourist in your own community causes you to love what your community offers and not your community itself. When you serve where you live, your heart for where you live will expand. You will find yourself praying for your community more, enjoying your community more, and filled with a greater love for the people around you.

3. Caring for a community does include consuming from it.

The above is not to say we should not consume from our community. In fact, one way we care for our community is to consume from it. Practically speaking, consuming from my community supports the businesses and the leaders in my community. Consuming from my community also helps me and my family enjoy our community, know our community, and speak in relevant way to our community. You can't learn the language of your community if you don't consume from it. If you import all your consumption from outside your community via your Prime account, you will miss opportunities to see the beauty of your local community. Enjoying local activities, food,

arts, and sports helps you connect with your community. Enjoy the good of your community with an eye on caring for your community. Consuming from your community should be done with a view of caring for the community where the Lord has placed you.

> [Read more from Eric.](#)
