

The Real Meaning of Community and Mission

My wife and I have a rugged wooden farm table. It's not impressive—there are scratches, stains, and some cracks that make you wonder if it can even hold another plate. As a family of four, the table is probably too big for us. As a matter of fact, we don't even have enough chairs to go around it so an old trunk that sits on iron cast wheels acts as a bench. Even though the table is bulky and awkward, it has become the most significant place in our house. It is our place of meeting. Around this simple piece of furniture we share stories, corny jokes, old memories, laughter and tears, joys and pain. Together we eat, pray, and live around this tattered table.

It's rare that our family is the only one gathering around this table. Our kids love having others join us and are constantly asking the question, "Who's coming over tonight?" Having others share a meal with us has become a regular rhythm in which we live. We are learning to view our home, and this farm table, as a means of advancing the gospel.

Through this God-ordained transition we have seen God transform our understanding of both community and mission.

COMMUNITY AND MISSION MEET

Within the church, we tend to equate the word "mission" with a trip we take or a weekend project that we interact with on occasion. We are prone to define "community" as something that we experience through some type of Sunday program or home group bible study. Thankfully there is no need to separate community and mission. In the wisdom of God's plan, these two critical aspects of the Christian life work in tandem. Jesus, in fact, prayed for this in John 17. He begs the Father "that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me" (Jn 17:23). Jesus links the love that we have with one another with his mission to the world. As we grow in love for one another, the world will be drawn to saving faith.

Your city can be transformed when community and mission meet at the table. Your table can be more than a place that meals are shared—it can become the place where community and mission meet. Picture it: a table for the hurting, the lonely, the rich, the has-beens, the have-nots, the popular, the rebellious, and the self-righteous. Imagine God taking those gathered around your table and forming them together for the greatest mission they could ever join. This is His track record from Genesis to now. Community is more than a Sunday and mission is more than a trip.

The Christians mission involves you to bringing your friends who know Jesus into your home while intentionally and simultaneously inviting friends who do not yet know Christ. Set the table, serve the food, pray for God's blessing, and watch Him do the work.

I believe that the Christian community and God's mission go hand in hand. We must create the space for those who do not have the gospel to see the gospel put on display. Jesus said in John 13:35, *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

God has a divine meeting waiting on you—I invite you to pull up a seat at the table and experience life in community.

[Read more from Dustin.](#)
