

Quotes On Community

"It would be a fundamental contradiction for a God whose essential nature is community, to create a church whose essential nature is individualism! It would certainly give the lie to any claim to be made 'in God's image'. Whenever the church expresses itself apart from community, it is denying something very fundamental about the character of God."
- Morris Stuart, *Does God Need The Church?* 18-19

"We might define true community as that place where the person you least want to live with always lives." – Parker Palmer

"True community exists when the person you dislike most dies or moves away and someone worse takes that place." – Quaker proverb

"If we cannot be truly human alone – if we need the sacred relationship with a significant other – then is it possible that one is not truly growing in spirituality without co-travellers? ... Christian spirituality is a public encounter with a God who meets us in community." – David Augsburger, *Dissident Discipleship*, 64

"Community is a collision of egos, a furnace for welding steel-hard opinions, a crucible for melting the hard ores of self-interest into common goals. It offers the pain of not getting our own way, the promise of finding a third way together." – Augsburger, 66

"We do not choose our companions, we receive them as gift; we cannot sort, select, and assemble our kind of people, they come to us by grace. Likeness eliminates challenge; uniformity reduces growth; sameness frustrates creativity." – Augsburger, 66

"It is a network of fallible individuals and flawed families seeking to learn together how to work through the various issues they carry with them." – Augsburger, 66

"In the Christian scriptures, the highest word, the most virtuous form of love, is not agape, but koinonia, the mutual, reciprocal, committed, and celebrative love of intimate relationship, authentic community, and responsive fellowship... In this profound fellowship of life lived in relationship, the individual self is surrendered and then regained transformed, yielded in its individualism but rediscovered with rich individuality." – Augsburger, 69

"We discover who we are face to face and side by side with others in work, love and learning." – Augsburger, 73

"Community is a people with a shared identity and common virtues woven into a coherent story." – Augsburger, 74

"Nothing is real until it is embodied. The community of faith must be a community of deeds." – Augsburger, 75

"Innumerable times a whole Christian community has broken down because it had sprung up from a wish dream. The serious Christian, set down for the first time in a Christian community, is likely to bring with him a very definite idea of what Christian life together should be and to try to realise it. But God's grace speedily shatters such dreams. Just as surely as God desires to lead us to a knowledge of genuine Christian fellowship, so surely must we be overwhelmed by a great disillusionment with others, with Christians in general, and, if we are fortunate, with ourselves... Every human wish dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial."

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

"The exclusion of the weak and insignificant, the seemingly useless people, from a Christian community may actually mean the exclusion of Christ; in the poor brother Christ is knocking at the door. We must, therefore, be very careful at this point." – Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

"Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work. 'The kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies. And he who will not suffer this does not want to be of the Kingdom of Christ; he wants to be among friends, to sit among roses and lilies, not with the bad people but the devout people. O you blasphemers and betrayers of Christ! If Christ had done what you are doing who would ever have been spared' (Luther)."
– Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*