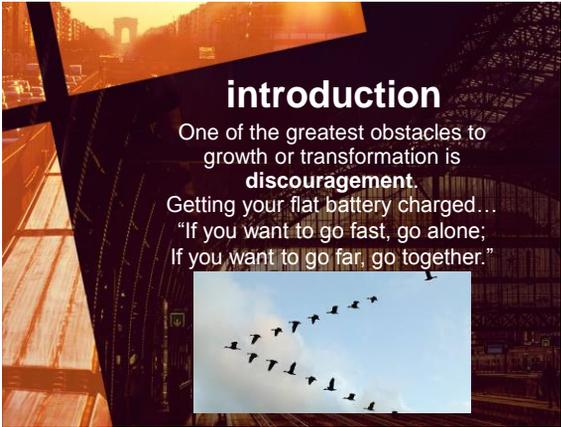




God's Building 8: Intentional Community

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introduction

One of the greatest obstacles to growth or transformation is **discouragement**.

Getting your flat battery charged...

"If you want to go fast, go alone;
If you want to go far, go together."





hebrews 10.24-25

24 And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. [NRSV]



Preparation And let us consider
Provocation how to provoke one another
Presence to love and good deeds,
Perspective not neglecting to meet together,
as is the habit of some,
but encouraging one another,
and all the more as you see
the Day approaching.

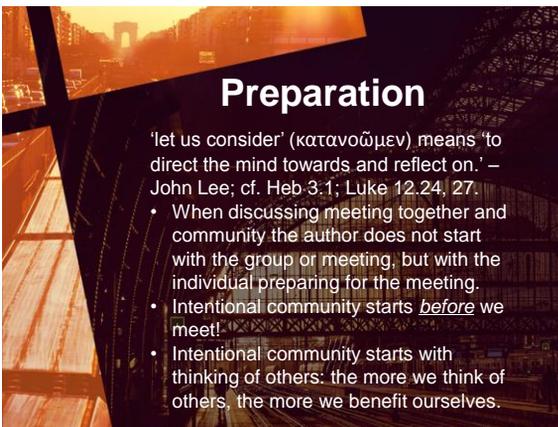


Intentional Community

Intentional community requires:

- Preparation (before meeting)
- Presence (at meeting)
- Provocation (during meeting)
- Perspective (on meeting)

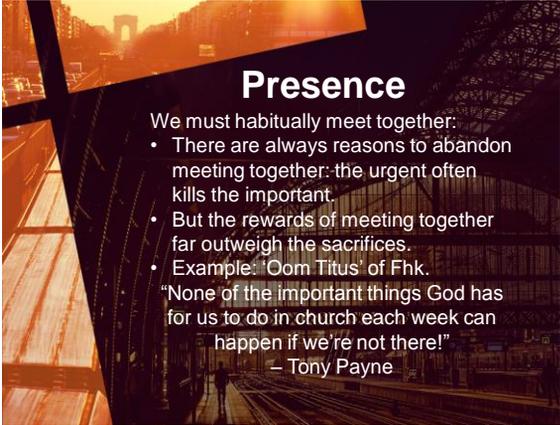
Intentional community is the solution to the problem of discouragement we so often face.



Preparation

'let us consider' (κατανοῶμεν) means 'to direct the mind towards and reflect on.' – John Lee; cf. Heb. 3.1; Luke 12.24, 27.

- When discussing meeting together and community the author does not start with the group or meeting, but with the individual preparing for the meeting.
- Intentional community starts *before* we meet!
- Intentional community starts with thinking of others: the more we think of others, the more we benefit ourselves.



Presence

We must habitually meet together:

- There are always reasons to abandon meeting together: the urgent often kills the important.
- But the rewards of meeting together far outweigh the sacrifices.
- Example: 'Oom Titus' of Fhk.

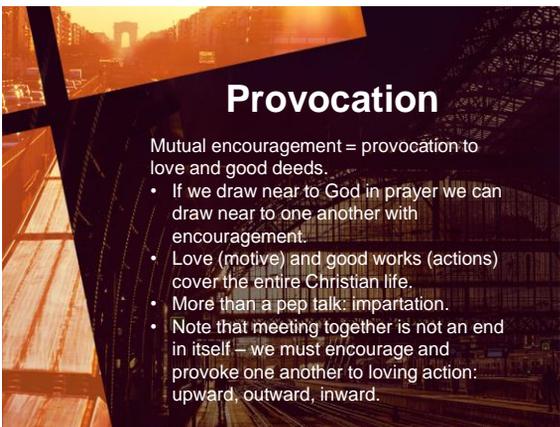
"None of the important things God has for us to do in church each week can happen if we're not there!"
– Tony Payne



Provocation

Encouragement activates; discouragement deactivates.

- Transformation happens best in community, but not just any community is transformative.
- There's a kind of community that's worse than isolation (Prov 21.19).
- Does the 'quarrelsome wife' inspire her husband to change (Prov 19.13// 27.15; 21.9, 19; 25.24)?



Provocation

Mutual encouragement = provocation to love and good deeds.

- If we draw near to God in prayer we can draw near to one another with encouragement.
- Love (motive) and good works (actions) cover the entire Christian life.
- More than a pep talk: impartation.
- Note that meeting together is not an end in itself – we must encourage and provoke one another to loving action: upward, outward, inward.

Perspective

We should view our gathering from an eternal perspective as we see 'the Day' of 'hope' (10:23) approaching.

- The approaching Day → urgency to our gathering: 'and all the more...'
- Same word used for 1) meeting together and for 2) eschatological ingathering on 'the Day' (2 Thess 2.1; Matt 23.37; 24.31)
- We gather together in anticipation of the final ingathering of 'the Day'

Conclusion

Imagine an ever growing intentional community that was *consistently* prepared, present, and provoking one another to love and good deeds – who wouldn't want to be part of it?



I ENCOURAGE
What's your Super Power?

Conclusion

Take 10-15 min before your small group meeting this week to 'consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds' by 'encouraging one another'.



ENCOURAGE
ONE ANOTHER
