

# Community

## Enter In

As you come before God, take a couple minutes and reflect on your day. If it's morning, think through how yesterday went. If it is afternoon or evening, how has today gone for you? How did you deal with the various faces that have passed you by? What personal interactions felt good? Did you get frustrated with anyone? Anyone you need to forgive or vice versa? Did you feel in competition with, or encouraged by anyone? Give all these people and interactions up to God and ask him simply to help you love people more.

## The Kingdom of Heaven is Like This

Paul described his relationship with the Corinthian church in very vibrant and deeply emotional terms. He wrote more to them than any other church. He spoke of the Corinthians (and the church worldwide) as a body. Read through 1 Corinthians 12:14-25. Similar to Paul's analogy, Henri Nouwen speaks of the Church as a Mosaic. Of the individual believers he says, "Each little piece seems so insignificant. One piece is bright red, another cold blue or dull green . . . Some look precious, others ordinary. Some valuable, others worthless. Some look gaudy, others delicate. As individual stones, we can do little with them except compare them and judge their beauty and value. When, however, all these little stones are brought together in one big mosaic portraying the face of Christ, who would ever question the importance of any of them? If one of them, even the least spectacular one is missing, the face is incomplete. together in one mosaic, each little stone is indispensable and makes a unique contribution to the glory of God." (from Can You Drink the Cup?)

I've always had people I've looked up to and have wanted to emulate. Certain musicians and athletes, personality traits of friends that I find desirable. Lifestyles and experiences that friends have had, ideologies that influence me. About 6 months ago God stopped me and I saw that I wanted to be like others far more than I wanted to be myself. I tried to build into myself things I saw attractive in others, which eventually led me to idolize them and hold them on a pedestal. There was no way I could hold up the many ideals and characteristics I was chasing after. And God knew I couldn't either. He began to show me that all people fit into this great community, some given to make songs which others could sing along to, some given to play sports in which fans could cheer for, some given to the sciences through which we can explore our world. God showed me that I didn't have to try to be all of these, but in belonging to the same community as these athletes and artists and intellectuals I could take joy in the gifts given to them but I still had the freedom to do what God has gifted me to. I didn't have to hoard all the things I admired about them, but I could still enjoy them in community. This removed the competition I felt with others, allowing me to simply enjoy the unique qualities of others instead of trying to take them on for myself.

## As You Go

Think through today/this week as life in community. Some people have gifts you desire, some have had experiences you long for, and vice versa. In community we are able to enter in and share in each other's lives. We don't have to compare or compete because none are to look exactly the same. Each of us brings exactly what God desires of us, simply ourselves, and that's what makes a mosaic beautiful.

