



The first thing declared *not good* in all of Creation was Adam being alone (Genesis 2:18).

- Eve was created not just for romantic relations, but for companionship (community).
- At Brookwood, we encourage connection with Christians as a central part of pursuing relationship with Christ.

Parents have the most influence in the life of a student.

- Who else helps guide students in a healthy direction?
 - Friends are a crucial component in the life of a teenager.
 - Parents should invest time getting to know their child's friends.

Three Hallmarks of Healthy Community.

- Christ Centered.
 - Community can easily be found amongst coworkers, teammates, classmates, etc.
 - Ideally the community in the life of a student will be focused on Jesus
 - *As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.* Proverbs 27:17.
 - Parents should ask, *Who is sharpening my student? Do they love Jesus?*

- Consistency.
 - Church is often what we do when we have nothing else to do.
 - Engaging in Christ-centered community and small groups is usually one of the first things to get cut when we're overwhelmed with our schedules.
 - Showing up truly is half the battle.
 - How high of a priority is community for your family?
 - Students take their cue from parents.
 - If parents don't value and prioritize consistently engaging in community, students are unlikely to do so themselves.
 - Acts 2:42-47 paints a picture of a consistent Christ-centered community. An excellent reference for what we as the Church should look like.
 - *All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their*

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property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 (NLT)

- Confessional.
 - This is a term that may strike people in a strange way.
 - The idea is not to emulate the Catholic model of confessing to a stranger.
 - On the contrary, confession is a practice best done among people who are deeply connected to one another
 - James 5:16 says that confessing sin and seeking accountability/prayer leads to healing. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.
 - The temptation to keep struggles and sin private is strong, but we are not meant to carry burdens alone.
 - Galatians 6:2 says *Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.*

It's tempting to build a sizable community to rely on, and that's not inherently wrong, but smaller numbers are preferable.

- Jesus ministered to thousands, but spent the bulk of his time with 12 friends.
 - And within that 12, Jesus invested most heavily in 3.
- MORE TIME with LESS PEOPLE yields GREATER RESULTS.
 - Parents can encourage students who feel they only have a few close friends by pointing out that this is Jesus' model.

Brookwood Student Ministry believes in the value of community.

- Each Ministry makes time as a part of its weekly programming for small groups.
 - This is a time to help make a big church seem smaller.
 - It's a great way for students to engage in deeper connections.
- For high school students especially, we encourage mentoring.
 - Having a mentor is an incredibly helpful part of community that can help guide students (and adults) through difficult circumstances and situations.

RESOURCES

- *Saturate*, by Jeff Vanderstelt