



July 24



Building Community

Philip Yancey



This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. [Ephesians 3:6](#)

Read: [Ephesians 2:19–3:11](#)

Bible in a Year: [Psalms 35–36](#); [Acts 25](#)

“Community” is the place where the person you least want to live with always lives, says Henri Nouwen. Often we surround ourselves with the people we *most* want to live with, which forms a club or a clique, not a community. Anyone can form a club; it takes grace, shared vision, and hard work to form a community.

The Christian church was the first institution in history to bring together on equal footing Jews and Gentiles, men and women, slaves and free. The apostle Paul waxed eloquent on this “mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God.” By forming a community out of diverse members, Paul said, we have the opportunity to capture the attention of the world and even the supernatural world beyond (Eph. 3:9–10).

In some ways the church has sadly failed in this assignment. Still, church is the one place I visit that brings together generations: infants still held in their mothers’ arms, children who squirm and giggle at all the wrong times, responsible adults who know how to act appropriately at all times, and those who may drift asleep if the preacher drones on too long.

If we want the community experience God is offering to us, we have reason to seek a congregation of people “not like us.”

Lord, remind us that the church is Your work, and You have brought us together for Your good purposes. Help us extend grace to others.

The man who lives in a small community lives in a much larger world. G. K. Chesterton
