

Pete Campola

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Subject: 40 Days starts tomorrow- PREVIEW 2

40 Days of Community

A Set of Thoughts, Ideas, Questions and Ponderings
Submitted for your Digestion
September 24, 2005

Introduction: We are all in “*this*” 2gether. No one is getting out alive. As we explore what it means to be in community through Rick Warren’s better together it is essential that we tailor make this study to fit our communities. This devotional is meant to be a conversation starter. It is personal musings on the daily readings’ subject. If another author is not noted then the opinions expressed are those of Jodi Haier and only reflect her understandings and her journey. If you do not wish to receive a devotional a day for the next 40 days, please respond to this email with a thoughtful “no, thank you” **Instead of just forwarding this *please* send people’s email address to me. I am not trying to be a control freak but I want to know where God’s going with this. People viewing this on the webpage can contact the webmaster with any comments. THANKS! Jodi**

Fellowship 2gether: “cultivating a life in common”

(1Cor 1:10) When I think of fellowship I think of the blockbuster, Fellowship of the Ring. That fellowship was made up of hobbits, elves, humans, wizards and dwarves. They looked different. They spoke different languages. They had different values. They had different life spans. They had different perspectives. They didn’t even stay in the same company for an entire film/book. Yet there was a unity, a life in common that they shared. It was the same belief; that evil must not triumph. Despair cannot be the rule of law. Oppression must not stand unchallenged.

Somehow coffee hour pales in comparison. This week we will hear the first message in the series and meet with our groups for the first time. What shared belief will tie us together? Will “evil must not triumph” be catchy enough? What phrase is big enough to motivate us and specific enough to not overwhelm us? Cultivating a life 2gether involves much more than coffee and conversation. However, God uses every opportunity; maybe we should see how God likes his mug of joe.

Grow 2gether: “accepting, affirming, and advising”

(Rom 15:7, 1Thess 5:11, Col 3:16)

Dr. M. Scott Peck is author of such books as The Road Less Traveled, and A Different Drummer, and he has also designed community building workshops that were popular in the 80’s. He has some interesting insights into the question, “What is Community?” (These quotes are taken from The Different Drummer book on tape) “So in 1630, John Winthrop, who was the first governor in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, before the colonists settled said to them, ‘We must delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own, rejoice 2gether, mourn 2gether, labor and suffer 2gether, always having before our eyes, our community; as members of the same body.’”

Serve 2gether: “working 2gether with 1 heart & 1 purpose”

(Phil 2:2) Have you ever manned (womanned?) a phone bank? It is a room filled with phones and stale donuts and/or cold pizza crusts. Often it is filled with individuals who are doing their part for the cause. Each phone call is a one-on-one experience. In college, a sorority, fraternity or club would volunteer to take an hour or a night. I loved getting a call then. Instead of a lonely person doing their duty, I'd be thrust into the middle of a fun community. Besides the sales pitch, I got weather and sports. There was laughter, energy and a shared spirit. I felt part of something even though I was only connected by the phone. I wanted to write a check not just to support the cause but because I wanted them to reach their goal. I guess that's the difference between begging and stewardship. It is a change from their purpose to our purpose. Let's be contagious! (as opposed to infectious)

Worship 2gether: “come 2gether in my name”

(Matt 18:20) This prayer is taken from The United Methodist Book of Worship, World Communion Sunday Service.

O God, we join with our sisters and brothers around the world

In remembering Christ's sacrifice for us.

For the opportunity to eat and drink together,

And for the life we have received,

We give you thanks and praise.

In the abundance of your many gifts,

Grant us the grace to fill one another's lives with love.

Redeem, restore and remold us until we are made new.

Transform our daily bread into the bread of life,

And the cup we drink into the cup of salvation.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

(Barbara Dunlap-Berg)

This is obviously about communion. Yet, doesn't this express our desire in worship as well? Thank you for this community, move it towards your purpose. Transform our daily grind, our routine, and our habits into a life that transforms others. Let the cup we drink be offered as saving grace to the thirsty. This prayer is not just about bread and grape juice. I doubt that is what your host/hostess will be serving at your small group. It is about the sustenance that you will receive by being in the Word of God and being a valued part of His body. It is about the grace that others, through God, will extend to you. We are literally joining our brothers and sisters around the world. This e-mail will be read in Costa Rica, Iowa, Biloxi, Syracuse, Kinderhook and all over the Mohawk Valley. (Let me know if I forgot someone/somewhere) This is not taking into account all the other churches that are also working through other 40 Day Campaigns. Take a moment in your prayers and/or meditations to reach out with your spirit and touch and be touched by every other spirit seeking communion. That is part of worship and part of being 2gether in His name.

Reach Out 2gether: “get others to believe”

(Phil 1:27) Next time you are with a bunch of people, look up. Stare at a certain spot silently until you count to thirty. Then join into the conversation at hand. You will notice others trying to find the object of your interest. Some may even ask you about your behavior. In thirty seconds you have caused people to mimic your behavior and engage you in conversation about it. Now that's evangelism! Imagine if your life is so full of Jesus that others are drawn to mimic it. Perhaps they will just be drawn to question you. Check out 1Peter 3:15 “but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you” (NRSV) When people ask me, “What have you got to be hopeful for? Why are you smiling?, or What makes you so special?” I plan on being ready with an answer. And I pray that the obvious behaviors people mimic are the spirit driven ones not my selfish ones. So next time you are with a bunch of people, look up, that's where the answers are.