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AUTHENTIC

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Introduction

"Christian community exists when believers connect with each other in authentic and loving ways that encourage growth in Christ. They engage in transparent relationships that cultivate, celebrate and make evident Christ's love for all the world" (Spiritual Disciplines Handbook). As believers, engaging in transparent relationships can be a challenge because we've been burned in the past, we doubt ourselves or we mistrust others and God. Nonetheless, we long for authentic community. We desire a place of acceptance where we are encouraged to keep pressing on even when things get messy.

Discussion

What words would you use to describe an authentic relationship?

When has authentic community or friendship nurtured and sustained you? What was it like for you?

As a group, read [Malachi 1:1-13](#) and paraphrase the Lord's accusation against the Israelites.

Why does God require first-rate, unblemished worship? Why does this please him?

God says that He'd rather have someone shut and lock the temple doors than accept a blemished sacrifice (v. 10). What would it be like if we locked ourselves out of church before we allowed ourselves to worship with an inauthentic heart? Would our worship be any different? How would you read the Bible and pray differently, knowing God desires an authentic heart?

Think about it

"God's one plan for reaching the world is rooted in the community of broken people who gather with a desire to love Him and bring in His kingdom. We will never be perfect people; but imperfect people committed to a radical Spirit-empowered love can change their relationships and their world." How can God use your authenticity to bring in His Kingdom?

Do something

When you spend time alone with God this week, allow yourself to be just as you are. Let God see your brokenness, your joys and anxieties. Pray for help and encouragement as you enter into this time. Write down what you learn in this experience.

Live life together by joining a small group or a class. You can register for both at prairielakeschurch.org.



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