

RESTORE
LIVING IN COMMUNITY

Friday, May 8

Reading: 1 Kings 19

1 Kings 19:14 *He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and put Your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."* **15** *The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came..."* **18** *Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."*

The prophet Elijah had just experienced a great victory (see 1 Kings 18). He had challenged the false prophets of Baal and saw God send fire from heaven when he prayed. He had witnessed the people fall on their faces and proclaim, "The Lord, He is God." At his prayer, God sent rain to end a 3 ½ year drought. Yet despite all this, when threatened by Queen Jezebel, Elijah runs for the hills. He sits under a desert bush and prays for God to end his life.

God responds to His depressed prophet by providing for his needs and leading him to Mount Horeb (another name for Sinai) where He displays His power. Then God speaks to Elijah in "a gentle whisper." Twice Elijah will complain, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and put Your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." God responds by telling Elijah he is not alone, "Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel – all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal." He then gives Elijah a companion to share his mission and ministry with – Elisha.

We were never meant to 'go it alone!' God wants us to live our lives in community. He desires us to share our hurts, habits, and hang ups and find strength from sharing our life with others. The writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews put it this way:

Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:23-25)

"Not giving up meeting together" is not just about coming once a week to a church service. I like to view weekly worship services like a refueling station. We come to worship together through song, prayer, and studying God's Word. It is a time for renewal and to bring others to find renewal in Christ. But we need more than a once-a-week get together. Living life together is a daily process. We need a group of believers who can share in our joys and our burdens. We need relationships where we can encourage and "spur on" each other in our walk and work for the Lord. People we can call any time during the week who will listen and pray with us. We need community!

That is what small groups are all about! We build trustworthy relationships where we can share and not feel threatened. Relationships that are not judgmental. Relationships where what is shared will not become fodder for gossip. All this takes time, effort, and compassion. We need to live in community.

Are you involved in a group where you can build this kind of relationship?

Ask God to lead you to believers whom you can share your life with and "spur one another on toward love and good deeds."