

## How Do We Live in Community as the Body of Christ?

What do healthy communities look like and "feel" like? What are the challenges and, dare we say, "dangers" and what are the benefits? How can churches (leaders) encourage community living in an ever independent Europe? How can we encourage this generation to live in real community and not in a virtual one?

**Connie Duarte** studied both in the areas of missions and communication while living in Canada. In 1998, she moved to Portugal to work with university students. After ten years with GBU Portugal, Connie began working with the Baptist Theological Seminary. Currently she is one of the pastors at the Meeting Point, a Baptist church in Estoril, Portugal. She also travels around Europe speaking at conferences and seminars. Connie loves teaching and preaching and longs to see more young people using their gifts both in missions and the local church. She has a passion for integrated mission and community living. While Connie loves working with church, missions, preaching, and teaching, a bigger passion is her family: her husband of fourteen years João, and their two boys, Joshua and Caleb.

### I. Case Study: Meeting Point

#### A. A journey through Acts 1-5 (special focus on 1-3)

### II. What are healthy communities

#### A. The trinity (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:5-11; I Peter 1:1-2)

#### B. God/Man relationship pre-fall (Genesis 1:26; 2:15ff)

#### C. Early Church (Acts 1-5)

#### D. Essential Centre – Jesus (Ephesians 4:11-16)

### III. What are the Challenges and Dangers of Community living

#### A. Challenges

1. Lack of roots
2. Many “competing” communities
3. The “move” towards virtual communities

## B. Dangers

1. Modernity
2. Inward Focused (Fortress Mentality)
3. Difficult to sustain over time

## IV. How do we get to healthy communities

### A. Subvert Modernity

1. Techno-driven vs Spirit driven
2. Market-driven vs the fruit produced
3. Politically-driven vs dynamic and less-structured

### B. **Be** the Community

1. Prayer
2. Spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:11)
3. Honouring one another (Romans 12)

### ***Suggested Readings:***

Dawn, Marva J. *Truly the Community*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992.

Harris, Joshua. *Why Church Matters*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2011.

### ***Suggested Lectures:***

Fellows, Andrew. *Community as a Subversion of Modernity*. L'Abri Lecture Downloads, 2009.

Keyes, Dick. *Christian Community-Hopeless ideal*. L'Abri Lecture Downloads, 2011.

Morrell, Sue. *Community, the Grace and the Grind*. L'Abri Lecture Downloads, 2005.