**It Takes a Village**

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Your marriage needs a community because…

1. …your marriage needs another set of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. …your marriage needs to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by other \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of marriage.
3. …your marriage was not created to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (2 words).

“A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12, NLT)

How do you get community around your marriage?

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to join.
2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ others.

“And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.  For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord.  For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church…” (Ephesians 5:21-23, NLT)

“And out of your reverence for Christ be supportive of each other in love.  For wives, this means being devoted to your husbands like you are tenderly devoted to our Lord, for the husband provides leadership for the wife, just as Christ provides leadership for his church…” (Ephesians 5:21-23, TPT)

**"**Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, 'I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,' that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,' would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything?

But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don’t need you.' The head can’t say to the feet, 'I don’t need you.' **[…]**All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12: 14-21, 27, NLT)

 “Then Jesus’s mother and brothers came to see him, but they couldn’t get to him because of the crowd.  Someone told Jesus, ‘Your mother and brothers are standing outside, and they want to see you.’ Jesus replied, ‘My mother and brothers are all those who hear God’s word and obey it'” (Luke 8:19-21, NLT).

"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 10:24-25, NIV)

**Reflection Questions**

1. What negative names do you (inadvertently) call your spouse, in word or deed? Who around you sees your spouse in a more positive light? How can you intentionally seek to see your spouse through that person’s eyes?
2. What expectations about marriage (gender roles, division of labor, sex, communication, parenting styles, faith, money, politics, etc.) did you learn from your family of origin? Which of those are NOT working for your marriage?
3. Who do you have in your life who knows your pain, your needs, your dreams, and your heart?
4. What kinds of community seem exciting to you and your spouse for this season of life? What steps can you take to check it out and get involved?
5. Are you currently invested in an intentional faith community? If not, what is keeping you from getting connected?
6. Did anything come up from today that you would like prayer for? If so, please consider filling out a prayer card (anonymously or confidentially, if you wish) so that the prayer team can come alongside you in prayer for that.

ANSWER KEY: 1) eyes, 2) inspired, models, 3) stand alone. / 1) Ask, 2) Invite