

## Weekly Blogs on Leadership

by Dr. Jay Zinn • 5/2/2016

### Week 9

#### Isolation vs. Interdependence

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

—1 Corinthians 12:21 (NIV)

A growing concern I have today is that technology gives rise to isolation and isolation creates detachment from other members of Christ's body. Instead of picking up the phone to talk, we text. Relationships are reduced to "sound bites" of time. Quality time is reduced to "measured" time—meaning, *less* is more. Our techno-driven, societal *norm* carries the good with the bad. On one hand, we're able to accomplish more, achieve more, and advance more. On the other, we pay the price of needing more time to apply and use all the technology we have to do even more, resulting in less time to engage in the *experience* of face-to-face encounters with each other.

God designed mankind for community. We need community. Community sparks, triggers, incites, and draws upon our latent identities discovered and developed through the relational interchange of community. As members of Christ's church, he is the head and we are the body. In his body, each joint supplies something incredibly enriching [physically, emotionally, and spiritually] through our being together. For example, we all have blind spots in our lives. Without community, we won't recognize them as readily. As iron sharpens iron, so does the countenance of a man's friend (Proverbs 27:17). Jesus led his community of twelve disciples [from all walks of life and temperament] who rubbed against each other's jagged [blind spot] edges. Over time, those edges were smoothed down by the friction of iron sharpening iron. Jesus also helped them to discover those blind spots by being *with* them where he could observe their weaknesses, expose their weaknesses, and adjust them to a higher level of honoring each other. For example:

After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, "What were you discussing out on the road?" But they didn't answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, "Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

—Mark 9:33-35 (NLT)

Without community, and the setting which created the opportunity for Jesus to observe a pattern of ego (something he addressed several times), there wouldn't have been a teachable moment for his disciples to be adjusted in their worldview of "greatness." Community ... flesh pressing flesh as opposed to flesh pressing text buttons ... gave way to learning skills for leadership in three ways. First, by the "servant-model" Jesus demonstrated around them. Second, by being exposed to their blind spots of competitiveness and selfish ambition. Third, by being positioned to receive adjustment from a keen, astute leader who loved them enough to correct their error (*Faithful are the wounds of a friend*—Proverbs 27:6). In today's world of a social media that increases isolation, where can these three elements of community occur for developing and cultivating quality leaders? Good, healthy, leadership skills cannot develop apart from community. Authentic discipleship is "intentional" community and the biblical pattern for developing healthy, balanced leadership skills. It creates neither unhealthy *co*-dependence nor extreme independence (i.e.—rugged individualism). Instead, healthy *inter*-dependence happens; an interdependence through discipleship that exposes our blind spots and exercises our embryonic strengths that develop over time into effective leadership. Do we need the church body? Absolutely? But more importantly, the practice of *discipleship* happening within that church body in such a way as to cultivate a breeding ground for healthy, future leaders.