

**Introduction:** An ecosystem is a natural unit consisting of all plants, animals and micro-organisms (biotic factors) in an area functioning together with all of the physical (abiotic) factors of the environment. An ecosystem is a unit of interdependent organisms which share the same habitat. Ecosystems usually form a number of food webs which show the interdependence of the organisms within the ecosystem.

**Axiom:** The greatest seed in the greatest soil cannot grow in the wrong environment.

- The **command** of Jesus requires a very specific spiritual ecosystem. John 13:34-35
- The **example** of Jesus' ministry to develop His disciples demands a specific ecosystem. Mark 3:13-14
- The **practice** of the early church and its impact argue for a specific ecosystem. Acts 2:42-47
- The **history** of the church past and present confirm a specific ecosystem for spiritual growth and transformation.

## In the Right Way – Romans 12:12-13

- **Upward Focus** – *“Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer.”*
- **Outward Focus** – *“Contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing (pursuing) hospitality.”*

## Application / Discussion Questions:

1. Share a time when you've experienced authentic community in a significant way with brothers and sisters in Christ. What made it so special to you?
2. Describe a time when the hypocrisy of a Christian was a stumbling block for you.
3. Why do you think authenticity is so important in relationships? In demonstrating the reality of Christ to others?
4. What's the difference between “real needs” and superficial needs?
5. What specific step of faith/obedience do you need to take to build authentic community for you or someone else in order to be an answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17?