

Introduction

Welcome

We are about to embark on a journey hosted by **LifeCrossings** that will take you and your fellow travelers **From Here to Community** – from being an individual traveler to one who sees beyond personal concerns to the importance of relationships within wider communities.

Community may be formed around many things – a common task, mission or ideal, connections through family and kin, common experiences, common geography, common heritage or ethnicity. Christian community may be all of these things, but it is distinct from other communities to which we may belong. Christian community is one of the few places where people of different generations come together for the same purpose. But most of all, Christian community is different because it is Christ who brings us together, not anything we are or do. Christian life isn't a matter of adhering to certain principles or ideals. It's about belonging to Christ – and we belong to Christ together with others, not alone.

Your group of travelers will be encouraged through scripture, dramas, readings and discussion to become a more vibrant community with a greater understanding of, and commitment to, living with Christ-like love and care in American society.

We move from where we are now to this broader view of community by (1) examining some of the important challenges a Christian faces in our society, (2) learning how essential the Christian community is to Christian living and how that community can be enhanced, and (3) exploring potential responses of the Christian community to outside forces and opportunities.

The focus is clearly on the Christian community as a connector that can prompt us to act faithfully and can support us in making choices in a complex society.

Following the events that occurred on September 11, 2001, there appears to be a heightened communal consciousness and strong support for those affected by the tragedies. The many examples of “seeing beyond ourselves” offer renewed hope for strengthening community bonds in the future.

About LifeCrossings

The mission of **LifeCrossings** is to provide educational materials with companion Leader's Guides as well as workshops/retreats on topics that connect religious faith with the choices in life that challenge the Christian in today's society.

Twelve Journeys

The title ***From Here to Community*** suggests movement, and throughout the twelve sessions the movement intended is toward a Christian community that is more responsive to the challenges of Christian living. The metaphor of a journey is also used for each session:

- **Destination** – What we hope to see and understand on today’s journey.
- **Postcard** – Sharing among the group the thoughts and actions triggered by the previous session.
- **Food for the Journey** – Scripture and prayer.
- **Encounters Along the Way** – The heart of the session – a story or drama, readings from respected authors, and the central questions to be discussed.
- **Notes for the Travelogue** – Brief summary of the main points of the session.
- **Re-Entry** – Taking insights from this session into daily life. It includes personal reflection, a challenge for action, and additional reading under the heading of “Digging Deeper.”
- **Travel Guides** –References used in each session.

Stories

All of the stories and dramas (with one exception) in ***From Here to Community*** are true stories whose characters and places have been disguised. Many of the stories occur in a fictitious contemporary church called “Hope Church” where Rick and Pam are members. The exception is the story in Session 5 of an early Christian community that meets in a house church. Several references in addition to the Bible were used to create the drama.

Commitment

The sessions form a progression of thought and action that has the potential to be life changing. Each person who uses these materials is encouraged to:

- Embark on the entire twelve sessions.
- Make this book yours – take notes, circle new ideas, read regularly.
- Be a good listener. Let others speak for themselves.
- Share your thoughts, experiences, and hopes.
- Maintain confidentiality when it is requested or is obviously necessary.
- Try to be open to the new ideas and actions that are suggested in each session.
- Follow up as much as possible. Realize that the Holy Spirit is present and active in your life.
- Don’t short change yourself; take the time and effort to dig deeper into this topic.

You won’t be disappointed! God bless your learning and action!

Bon Voyage!