

DEEP



WIDE

v GROUP STUDY



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Deep & Wide: vGroup Study

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# DEEP-COMMUNITY

If you've ever sat down with a counselor to discuss boundaries, chances are the pool metaphor has come up. Friends are like pools. You have shallow friends, middle-of-the-pool friends, deep friends, and even people you don't let in your swimming pool. The reality is that we all need people in every area of the pool. Sadly, many of us either struggle to find deep friendships or we have all the wrong people in our deep end. Regardless, we all need three to five individuals we trust with some of the deeper things in life.

In our spiritual lives this remains true. If you are a Christian, you are a part of the church—a group made up of potentially hundreds of people. That's far too large of a group to have at your deep-end of the friendship pool. Even our vGroups are too large. These groups typically consist of ten to twenty people. Enter spiritual friendships. Here we find small groups of three to five that are gender-specific. In these kinds of groups, God can use community to grow us into spiritual maturity.

- Can you identify your “deep” friendships? If so, how many do you have?
- How have these friendships been important to you?
- How have these friendships contributed to your growth into spiritual maturity?

We could turn to countless places in Scripture to discuss intimate community. Perhaps one of the best is Colossians 3. Here the apostle Paul provides a picture of what Christian community should look like. These qualities no doubt should be present in spiritual friendships.

*<sup>12</sup>Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup>bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup>And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Colossians 3:12-17

- In verse 12, Paul says “put on.” Previously, in verse 5 he writes, “Put to death.” Why must certain things be put to death before anything can be put on?

Take a look at what Christians are to put to death in verses 5-11.

*<sup>5</sup>Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>On account of these the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup>In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup>But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup>Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.*

Colossians 3:5-11

- First, how does Paul describe the church? Why is this important for us?
- Take some time and identify how Christian community should look and operate. What do you see?
- As you reflect on this list, what comes easy for you and what is more challenging?
- Now reflect on what each of these qualities or behaviors should look like in the life of Vintage Church?

Biblical community is never easy because we're all broken people. However, we need each other. Many of us are in desperate need of deep, spiritual friendships. As we close our discussion, let's think practically how each of us can take steps to develop deep spiritual friendships in our lives.

- What is holding you back from developing deeper, spiritual friendships? How can you remove those barriers?
- Who are 2-3 others you can develop spiritual friendship with?
- What do you need from those spiritual friends to grow spiritually?
- What is your next step and when will you take it?