

TIKKUN VISION AND VALUES ON COMMUNITY AND COVENANT LOVE

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Many have asked us about the longevity of covenant relationships among Tikkun's leaders and within the congregations related to Tikkun. I believe that this arises from common convictions that are based on the Bible and an understanding of covenant love. Love is compassionate identification with the other that seeks their good guided by law. Love motivates us to act in certain ways to maintain community and long term friendship.

Here are a few of those dimensions of community covenant values.

1. We desire all to be so integrated into a depth of loving friendships in the community.
2. We also desire that all serve in significant ways to build up the community.
3. On the basis of the first two points, if a person is called to leave our community it should be a partially painful experience. If they are really called by God, we rejoice in their obedience to God and seek their good or their destiny as friends, but we will be sad to not have the same quality of time together due to distance and new commitments. Our desire is to build lasting life in one community, but always leaving room for God to call someone out.
4. As a corollary of love, we ask all who believe they have a call that would significantly affect the community to involve their closest friends and leaders in the decision making process, to ask questions, to confirm, or not confirm etc. This means hearing the voice of God with a humility that recognizes our partial accuracy and does not dogmatically pull the trump card of "God told me" where the process of love is thwarted. The change of jobs, schedules, or a major move away, or a change of congregations affects others. When I was called from Chicago to Washington, I spent two months and five meetings to pray and seek God together with my leaders before gaining their confirmation. Thus our relationships remained strong because they were respected and loved to be part of the process. This also prevents rash decisions. In addition, if there is no confirmation, the person is still encouraged to pray again and make his final decision before God. We will affirm their right in conscience to make a decision even if we do not confirm it. That they sought confirmation in a serious way fulfills the claim of love. We will bless them and affirm them in conscience even if we do not agree.
5. Of course, if one believes he or she has a call to ministry, other factors are involved. We recall the communal confirmation of prophecy and prayer in the sending of Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13 as our model. In addition, the following guide us.
 - a. Is the person an elder or deacon level person according to I Tim. 3? If not, such a call cannot be confirmed and we cannot even affirm in conscience since this is a Scriptural standard.
 - b. Scripture provides us with no example of self appointment. Congregational leadership, planting etc. in our view requires being sent by a credible eldership in a congregation or denomination or stream. Even Hollywood lampooned those who are self ordained and called without accountability in the movie the Apostle. Secular people even perceive this is wrong. How much should this be our understanding?
 - c. If a person does not have confirmation for a call to paid gospel ministry, planting etc. but still has conviction, they have two choices. They can wait until the present leadership confirms that call or they can join a new community, build relationships and be ordained and

sent by them. This would take at least a year in our view. Again, Tikkun is in principle against self sending and self installation in ministry roles. This is a level of independence that has caused great harm. Many with good gifts have drawn a group of people only to see the sad pain of failure or poor long term leadership.

If all of us will bear these things in mind, we can build strong communities. This has been a key to 35 years of relationship among some of us and over 20 years among many.