



**MORNINGS
+ NIGHTS**

WEEK ONE (PART 1): INTRODUCTION

PRAY TOGETHER: (5 MINUTES)

Gather together as a community in a comfortable setting (around a table, on the couch, the floor of a living room, etc.). Have somebody lead a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your time together.

READ THIS OVERVIEW:

Throughout time, there have been key moments of growth in Christianity. However each period of growth began when the church was in crisis as a minority. As the tide shifts today and Christianity in the West becomes a minority once again, what does God want us to do? It can be easy to become combative as Christians, or be tempted to isolate ourselves or even become so exhausted that we feel like giving up. But history is full of minority Christian groups who found creative ways to flourish. From the Jewish minority in Babylon (Jeremiah 29) to the early church, to the clusters of missionaries in the Scottish Isles and the tiny small groups that changed the world, God uses minorities who get spiritually creative. Inspired by Jon Tyson and Heather Grizzle's book, this series will both look at and live out the 6 marks of a Creative Minority and prompt us to ask the question: could this be possible for CBC?

READ THIS QUOTE:

"A Creative Minority is a Christian community in a web of stubbornly loyal relationships, knotted together in a living network of persons who are committed to practicing the way of Jesus together for the renewal of the world." (A Creative Minority, Jon Tyson & Heather Grizzle, p.12)

WORK THROUGH THESE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How have you felt, and how do you sometimes react, when you feel that you live in a world that does not hold to Christian values?
- How do reactions which come out of fear reveal themselves among Christians?
- How do you see Jesus responding to a world which did not accept him and his teachings?
- What would it look like for us to be a creative minority, engaging with our world in everyday life?

WEEK ONE (PART 2): COVENANT: AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY OVER LOOSE NETWORKS

READ THIS SUMMARY

The first mark of a creative minority is learning to become a **covenant community**. In the midst of an individualistic culture, a creative minority in Australia must embody a collective and relational

experience of church. Jesus' entire ministry was mostly lived out in community. The New Testament writers were largely writing to groups of disciples living out the way of Jesus *together*. Even today, individuals burn out following Jesus on their own. A covenantal community however, lives out the way of Jesus by encouraging one another with authentic and humble love. Relational commitment at all costs, deeper intimacy and finding a unified purpose brings this type of creative community to life. Only then can we be sustained in the way of Jesus.

READ THESE KEY SCRIPTURES: John 13:34-35; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:19-22

CONSIDER THE CHART BELOW SHOWING THE CONTRAST BETWEEN AN INDIVIDUAL FOCUSED CHURCH CULTURE (BASED ON LOOSE NETWORKS) AND A COVENANT COMMUNITY.

EXPERIENCE	LOOSE NETWORKS	COVENANT COMMUNITY
CONFLICT	Individuals retreat into their private world	Confronts issues in relationships with humble love
GRIEF	Short-lived sympathy as individuals are consumed by their own pressures.	A sustained commitment to journey with those who mourn.
JOY	Fleeting experience of one another's joy.	Milestones in life are celebrated, joy is shared by all.
MISSION	Short individual bursts of evangelism with little accountability or support.	A commitment to being on mission together, sharing missional projects while supporting each other's vision and goals.

AS YOU CONSIDER THE VERSES OF SCRIPTURE ABOVE AND THE CHART, WORK THROUGH THESE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU CALL IT A NIGHT:

- What are some of the features of the Church that show it has been infected by the individualism of our age?
- What will be personally involved in choosing to be a true, close-knit, covenant community?
- Can you think of some historical examples of creative minorities living out a covenant community together? (e.g. The Clapham Sect, the Moravians).
- What could we creatively implement to help us "do life together" at CBC?