

# The Single Woman’s Call to Communal Life

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he Franciscans do it. The Benedictines are famous for it. Holy families strive to live it. It is something we are created for, and yet, know little about.

Scripture presents the communal life as a natural effect of coming into faith. In fact, the early church was formed around the communal life. This was not something the first Christians took lightly, rather, it was something they *devoted* themselves to (Acts 2:42).

They knew what the Benedictines and Franciscans know. They knew that when God called forth man into being He said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen 1:26). Sharing in the image and likeness of the Trinity, each of us is called to reflect the community of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Vocations of Marriage and Religious life obviously lend themselves well to establishing a Christ-centered community, but how do we live this call as single women? We are still created for community and our hearts still desire to be known, loved and cared for. We need the guidance of other women. We need to share our heartaches and joy-filled moments. We need each other.



Community is not far from any of us; however, it does need to be sought after. As single women, we must intentionally seek relationships with women who will guide us on the path to Heaven. A good place to start is with roommates, but it could also be found through a Bible Study or prayer group. Either way, the key is to establish a foundation of shared life. The pillars that form this foundation are prayer, meals, accountability and fellowship.

If Christ is to be the center of our lives, He must be the center of our community. In fact, no community will find its higher purpose without Him. The communal life demands communion with one another *through* Christ. This may manifest itself through shared prayer, Mass, singing hymns, or many other spiritual exercises.

Our Lord Himself demonstrates the importance of sharing meals. Not only does He eat with those to whom he is ministering, but He instituted His ultimate Sacrifice as a meal. Christ draws our attention to the pivotal role meals play in forming communities. Meals fill our need to be nourished while allowing us to establish familial bonds. They are a time to share life; to share stories and troubles, to laugh and enjoy each others company.

Keeping our Heavenly goal in mind, we see the importance of accountability in our communities. As sisters in Christ, we should be calling each other to live for Him in all things. This means bringing to light the often difficult but important areas that prevent the pursuit of holiness. Accountability can take the form of corrections, conversations of virtue, or reminders of goals and sacrifices that need to be upheld.

The communal life also calls us to true socialization. As women, our hearts are made to share in care-free timelessness with

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one another. During this time, we can let go of our worries and enjoy the little moments of life. This may include anything from reading aloud to painting nails to taking a walk. By sharing these moments, we open our hearts to a more genuine friendship.

With these pillars established, communities will develop a strong love of the Lord and of one another. This love will illuminate the path to Heaven and allow those who seek the face of the Lord to find Him. It will be a great source of encouragement in the pursuit of vocations and draw us ever nearer to the Heart of Christ.

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