

WORKSHEET: CHAPTER 17

INTIMACY **DISCIPLINE OF EXHORTATION**

REVIEW OF THE TYPES OF FELLOWSHIP:

EXHORTATION: To exhort is to plead, to urge insistently, to be single-minded and enthusiastic. It is the act of desiring someone's best by pointing them urgently toward the things of God.

TRAINING: To train someone is to pour into them the truths of God. It is to enable them, with the strong foundation of God's Word, to build their lives upon the Rock of Jesus so that they can live lives pleasing to Him and teach others also what they have learned.

CORRECTION: To correct someone is to stand alongside of them and point out a wrong decision or a continuous sin in their lives for the sole purpose of loving them back to the truth.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Though similar to an exhortation, encouragement practices the act of shoring up or coming alongside of someone for a period of time to help bear the weight of their burden. It is very personal and intimate when practiced with humility. It is what binds our hearts together in Christ.

REPROOF: This is more than correction for a sin; it is a refuting of a wrong belief or a stubborn refusal to turn from a false teaching. This is practiced on a more limited basis than correction. It requires a great deal of prayer, preparation and discernment. If you have not come alongside someone to first exhort or correct, the hammer of rebuke (unless it is an issue of timing or urgency) is probably too harsh and not yet needed. If, however, you have exhorted, encouraged, trained and corrected to no avail, then rebuke would be the next step.

EDIFICATION: To edify is to strengthen, to prepare and to establish so that a brother or sister in Christ can grow in his/her walk to the glory of God. It is about taking what God has poured into you and passing it along to another. In that act of fellowship (the sharing of ourselves with one another), the entire body is strengthened, including ourselves. It is about ties that bind.

PRACTICE THE DISCIPLINE OF EXHORTATION (FELLOWSHIP):

Do a personal inventory. First, take a look back over the last month and note times when you participated in the discipline of exhortation with brothers or sisters in Christ. If you can not describe at least a handful of times when you've practiced that discipline, make a plan to change that over the next several weeks. Don't be afraid to set up a time to meet for coffee or dinner with the *intention* of exhorting, encouraging or even correcting or training. Being intentional does not remove the potential for the encounter to be a true blessing beyond what you could plan. The Holy Spirit often takes our feeble plans and expands them in amazing ways.

Second, list the individuals with whom you have an inner circle relationship. Thank them for what they mean to you. Don't take for granted how truly blessed you are to have those kinds of relationships.

In addition, if you do not have anyone to list as an inner circle person, don't be discouraged. Pray for God to bring individuals into your life with whom you can be transparent and accountable. Meanwhile, seek to be "an inner circle friend". Serve others as God gives you an opportunity to serve. Encourage and exhort. Be willing to train and come along the side of. You will be surprised how others will respond to the light and the joy that they see in your life.