

Does it have to be church?

By [Tammerie Day](#)

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This is the question that comes back to me, pretty often, when I am talking with people about dreams: for a community that knows how to play and loves to work together (and vice versa), eats together and feeds other hungry people, infects with laughter and deals with tears, loves and is loving, accepts and is accepting. The list goes on, but those are the basics.

Given that the Spirit has been whispering in my ears since childhood, I want God to be at the center of all that ... mostly I think God already *is* at the center of all that ... but for folks who have only ever found life outside the church, putting the C word on these dreams kills it for them.

Church shouldn't hurt. Loving God shouldn't be an oxymoron. Atheism shouldn't be the only alternative to Christianity as usual.

Other people, frankly, have faced these problems for about as long as religion has been around; in every age, some band of folks has said, "This isn't working for me," and gone looking for another way to be and do love – the love that is equal parts awe and affection, gratitude and grace. It's not revolutionary to become more intentional about making and loving new friends, out of a desire for a few more folks to journey with and celebrate about; but apparently it is still a little revolutionary to love all comers, and call it church.

There are so many differences among us; and so many of those differences are attached to ways of being that we don't want to turn loose of, even if they bother people around us, or create difficulties. Can I love you anyway? Can you love me? That's really the revolutionary question – and challenge, and calling – at the heart of it all.

I think if we answered “Yes” to that question, and then put our “Yes” in the hands of the One who always already loves us, we could be part of a revolution. My heart longs for that struggle, and for friends to struggle with. I can’t say it any more plainly.

What are you longing for? Can we set our longings side by side, and see what spark might catch? Pick a day, a place, a time ... I’ll be there. Let’s talk.

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