

Community Ethos

Our faith is not primarily one of morals, but it has profound moral implications in terms of the perspectives and commitments with which we approach life and interact with each other. Christ has called us to a radical life, one in which assumed patterns of behavior are challenged and new ways of thinking, living, and relating are being formed. These are the ways of His kingdom of shalom. Some of the implications of this kingdom life are particularly important for the kind of community of learning and practice we wish to sustain at Evangelical. For example...

- We embrace fully all of the wonders of God's created world, because He created it and called it good. We eat and drink together and separately in gratitude for all God has given us. But we recognize that not all things we consume are good for ourselves or those with whom we share space. Therefore, in honor to ourselves and each other, when we are on campus or otherwise together in community we refrain from partaking in alcohol, illicit drugs, and other substances that impair, rather than enhance, our life together.
- We delight in the joys of being in relationship with each other and encourage each other toward maturity and freedom. But we recognize that we are all broken people, still in the process of being redeemed. Therefore, we promise to be safe for each other; that is, we will discipline our tongue to avoid gossip, we will tame our anger to avoid causing pain, we will use edifying language to avoid giving unnecessary offense, and we will in every way we can look out for the welfare of the other.
- We revel in the joys of human intimacy and seek intimate companions for our journey through the joys and challenges of life. We rejoice that God has created intimacy and makes it possible. But we also recognize how easy it is to use other people for our own pleasure or relief from pain. We also recognize that there are multiple kinds of intimacy, and joys in each one. Therefore, out of love for God and our neighbor, we limit the expression of sexual intimacy to one person of the opposite sex in the context of marriage.
- We are grateful for the Church, which is on earth the parallel of that divine community of love that is the Trinity. We find some of our individual identity in the People of God, and we seek to serve them with our gifts and passions. But we also recognize our culture's temptation toward hyper-individualism and the idolatry of the self. Therefore, we make active participation in a congregation of Christ's followers a priority, for despite its many flaws, the body of Christ is necessary for our journey.
- We are glad to follow Him who is the truth and to be in a community devoted to pursuing Truth. We agree that all truth is God's truth and are therefore not afraid to ask questions and to ponder deeply the mysteries of His working in the world. But we recognize that we live in a world that places a low value on truth-telling. Therefore, we covenant to speak the truth in love with each other, to be ruthlessly honest about giving and taking credit for ideas and labor, and honor each other as we pursue truth together.

There is a multitude of other ways in which we can live out the radical implications of God's Kingdom on earth, but these challenge us to look honestly at our own brokenness and sin, at our own justifications for self-serving behavior, and to offer both our pain and desires to Him who is able to heal us. We also recognize that this process of redemptive healing is lifelong, and so we will need to help each other at points along the way. Those who find themselves in need of the help of a brother or sister, a counselor or director, a pastor or mentor, will find themselves supported in a variety of ways at Evangelical Seminary.

Those available to come alongside during times of challenge or growth include our Dean of Students, our campus pastors, our faculty, staff, and administration, and, of course, our fellow students. For concerns of a particularly private, urgent, or therapeutic nature, we encourage you to begin with a campus pastor or the Dean of Students, who may then be able, as necessary, to connect you with other individuals who can provide more specialized assistance. These will be confidential and

supportive conversations, except in those cases in which there is a legal mandate to report a likely threat to life or safety.

Those who find it difficult to live out these commitments of our life together may be asked to leave this community for a time or even permanently, particularly if their behavior is injurious to others or to the integrity of the Seminary's mission. Legal violations or threats to the safety of others are particularly troublesome and will be addressed both relationally and legally.