

The Twins: Intimacy and Ultimacy (Rev. Helen Zidowecki, Revised Jan.2014)

Opening:

Dr. James Luther Adams, a leading UU minister, give a lecture at Andover Newton Theological School around 1980. In response to a question about why people come to our religious communities at all, Dr. Adams replied that they come for *ultimacy*, to wrestle with (and from time to time actually find answers to) life's ultimate questions. Who am I? In what or in whom do I trust? In what community do I belong? And they came for *intimacy*, a safe place in which they are accepted while making connections with others.

Bob Hill, who introduced Covenant Groups in the Southeast

People come into our communities looking for a place to belong (*intimacy*) and a place to seek meaning (*ultimacy*) about living and dying and the spaces between. To the question of intimacy, we offered positions on committees. To the issue of ultimacy, we talked more about increasing membership or pledging rather than the depth of our commitment to a cause in the world and to each other. And we often bank on Sundays to meet both needs, as if that were even possible!

Glenn Turner, who introduced Small Group Ministry to churches in Maine

Check-in: Why do you come to church?

Topic/Activity: (Suggestion: Have one person speak for Intimacy and another for Ultimacy)
Envision the twins, *Intimacy* and *Ultimacy*, here. They like being recognized and included.

Intimacy speaks:

“I am excited to be here! Over our time together, we can have ever deeper sharing from the soul. I like being able to *listen* to you without comment or judgment, and to know that I will be held by you in the same way. It is so nice to know that I can talk without someone needing to respond, and to know that I can just listen without your expecting a response from me. And I want to *learn* from you. We all have so much to give to each other – and to receive from each other. Like the song, “From You I receive, to You I give. Together we share and by this we live!” Do you know that song? Can you sing it with me?

Ultimacy speaks:

As we follow what Intimacy says, do you realize all of the topics that we can consider about living and our spiritual journeys – facets of the mundane and the sublime! The questions that we ask focus on meaning and significance. I am really glad about that. I don't do well with details. I like hearing your personal connection with the topic rather than trying to come to some common perspective. We all have differing views, and I relish the differences.

Questions: Do you identify more with intimacy or ultimacy?
When have you experienced intimacy and ultimacy?

Check-out/Likes and Wishes: How was this session for you?

Closing: (Can be read in Unison)

We have brought ourselves to this time together,
Different from groups and other gatherings,
But held by the common threads of our humanness and our passion.
And the Twins are smiling.