***A Church Called Tov*** **Book Study: Session #2**

***Discussion Sheet for* Chapters 2-4**

***Questions and Themes:***

1. Which of the elements of a toxic culture discussed in chs. 2-4 have you seen practiced in a congregation and what was the impact on you or others?
2. “Friends don’t let friends become narcissists” (p. 28). One key similarity among churches and ministries characterized by toxic cultures is the lack of real accountability for those who are in ministry leadership (pastors, church staff, leadership boards, elders, deacons, etc). What forms of accountability for ministry leaders have you seen in Christian churches and organizations that worked well? What not so well?
3. Truth-telling and repentance are two key aspects of leadership that mitigate the development of a toxic culture. But leaders are often reluctant to admit wrongdoing either on behalf of the institution or themselves. Why do you think that is? What can we do to create a culture in our churches that allows for failure?
4. If allegations of abuse were brought forward against a leader in your congregation, how do you think the congregation would handle it? What could your church do to improve the response?

***Main Themes of Ch. 2***

***(Early warning Signs):***

* Narcissism
* Power through Fear
  1. Power and authority vested in an individual
  2. Pastor’s approval becomes the gold standard
  3. Those approved gain status enhancement
  4. Power cuts with both sides of the blade (conferring status on some; and cutting people out)
  5. Fear-shaped culture develops
  6. Decisions rendered behind wall of secrecy
  7. Fear of status degradation
  8. Removal from circle

***Main Themes of Ch. 3***

***(How Toxic Cultures Respond to Criticism):***

* In toxic cultures, leaders seek to control the narrative by
  + denying, dismissing, ignoring allegations that are brought forward
  + Spin on Matthew 18, 1 Tim. 5:19,1 Cor. 6:1-8 to focus attention on the process rather than the wrongdoing.
* Healthy church cultures tell the truth and face the consequences.

***Main Themes in Ch. 4***

***(False Narratives):***

1. Discredit the Critics
2. Demonize the Critics
3. Spin the Story
4. Gaslight the Critics
5. Make the Perpetrator the Victim
6. Silence the Truth
7. Suppress the Truth
8. Issue a Fake Apology