

Community Part 1: Siblings

How to Use

The goal with these discussion guides during the next few weeks, is that with your group or a few others, to have honest and authentic discussions around this idea of living life together as a “new family in Christ.” The hope is that this resource is not simply a study guide to further discuss the previous weekend’s message or a certain text in Scripture, but instead an application guide of how to further flesh out and live out God’s vision for biblical community. Each week will have a brief overview to read together, 2-3 discussion questions and a suggested practice to implement with your group.

The discussion questions have been crafted in a way to help get past the surface level response we can default to and to dig into honest and perhaps challenging conversations. You might not get through them all each week and that’s okay. Allow for some space for the Spirit to work and to give time for the conversation to reach a more intimate level. We would encourage you to invite the people you’re walking through these guides with to perhaps be a little more vulnerable than they might normally be. If your group size is large, consider breaking up into a few smaller groups to better facilitate honest conversations.

Our goal for the suggested practice each week is to help establish some new rhythms and ways to live out this idea of biblical community. Our challenge to you is to try these practices through the entire 9 weeks of this series. Perhaps at the end discuss with your group about how these practices went and what they might want to continue doing.

We would also encourage you to start each discussion with a time of prayer, inviting the Spirit to work in you and your group’s heart and minds around this topic of community.

Overview (Read this aloud together)

Leader: Read Ephesians 2:8-22

In this letter from Paul, we are reminded of the reconciling work Jesus has done to not only bring us into right vertical alignment with God but also into His family. This family is a non-negotiable aspect of salvation, the natural outflow of our relationship with God as Father. Because “salvation” in Scripture is not just some transaction between Jesus that merely secures a ticket out of hell and into heaven. Salvation—the whole experience of growing into people who look like Jesus—*is being embraced, worked out, walked out, and lived out* in committed and deepening relationships with siblings in the Father’s family.

Yes, there are problems in Christian community. Yes, there are tensions and breakdowns and failures in the church. Like children in any family, we are broken. But in God’s grand design *and as a means of his grace to mature us*, they have the potential to make us more like Jesus. How can we learn to lay our lives down, to bear with the failings of others, and to give of

ourselves and our resources—the things that Jesus did—if we don't have "others" we are resolved to devote ourselves to, no matter how messy or hard or frustrating it gets?

This is a central truth of what Paul is saying. Life with Jesus means doing life with one another.

Discussion Questions

Is the idea of being "siblings in Christ" with other followers of Jesus refreshing or challenging for you? Share why.

What are barriers or hesitations that hinder you from fully investing in community?

Are there things in our current community rhythm that prevent us from becoming more like a family? Or are there rhythms that we aren't currently doing that might help better form us into family? If so, what are they?

Leader: Take some time for prayer at the end of the discussion time, praying specifically for things that were discussed or brought up.

Practice for This Week

The invitation is to set aside some intentional time to pray for our community. Specifically, spend some time in intercession, asking God to guide and guard our community as we work through this series together.

If you're not currently in some expression of biblical community, spend some time praying and asking God to reveal what it might look like for you to take a step towards participating in one.