




# WHEN COMMUNITY FEELS OUT OF REACH

*A Pastoral Guide to Finding, Building, and Keeping Healthy Biblical Community*

Supplement to:   
*the* CHARACTER  
*of a* **DISCIPLE**  
*Engages in Biblical Community*

# INTRODUCTION

God designed the Christian life to be lived in community. We were never meant to walk with Jesus alone. And yet, even in a church full of groups, ministries, people, and opportunities, many still struggle to find the kind of connection they hoped for. If that's you, you're not broken, and you're not alone. Community doesn't always come quickly, but it does come to those who seek it with humility, patience, and a heart to serve.

Most people in the church understand that community is important. They know isolation is not God's design. But what do you do when you aren't finding the community you hoped for? When you've tried a group or two, attended faithfully, and still feel disconnected? Or when the people you used to feel close to have shifted into a new season—or things came to an abrupt, unwanted end?

This resource will help you answer those questions with biblical wisdom, practical clarity, and pastoral encouragement. Engaging in Biblical community is not just a "good idea." It is one of the defining marks of the character of a disciple.

Biblical community is how God shapes us, heals us, forms Christ in us, and anchors us in the life of the church. It is essential for following Jesus faithfully and fruitfully.

Scripture consistently reinforces this reality. The early church did not grow in isolation, but in shared life. In Acts 2:42, we are told that *"they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."* Devotion to Christ was inseparably tied to devotion to one another.

# **THIS GUIDE WILL HELP YOU:**

- Find the right kind of Biblical community
- Understand the seasons of community
- Avoid unhealthy patterns
- Embrace intentionality
- Step boldly into relationships that form the character of a disciple

# **STEP 1:**

## **HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT BIBLICAL COMMUNITY**

Before we can grow in Biblical community, we need to understand what kind of community we're actually looking for. Many people feel disconnected simply because they've been trying to fit into the wrong type of group for the season they are in. Biblical community is multi-layered, and discipleship happens in different ways across different environments. So before jumping in, it helps to clarify what type of community will best serve your spiritual life right now.

### **CLARIFY THE KIND OF BIBLICAL COMMUNITY YOU NEED**

Engaging in Biblical community doesn't mean one group will meet every need. Different spaces encourage different aspects of discipleship.

You may need:

- Discipleship spaces (DMGs, accountability groups, mentoring)
- Friendship and fellowship (closer relational circles)
- Life-stage community (Young Adults, Young Families, Empty Nesters, Seniors, Widows/Widowers)
- Gender-specific community (Men's / Women's groups)
- Mixed community (Home Fellowship groups)
- Serving community (ministry teams)
- Foundational community (Starting Point, Foundations, Equip classes)

Discipleship is diverse. Biblical community takes many forms. This diversity is not accidental — it is by design.

Romans 12:4–5 reminds us:

*“For as in one body we have many members... so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”*

God has not designed every relationship to function the same way. Some relationships will challenge you, some will comfort you, and others will sharpen you. The key is not finding one perfect group, but engaging faithfully in the body God has placed around you.

## **DON'T IDEALIZE BIBLICAL COMMUNITY**

Many people enter community with unrealistic expectations—expectations no group could ever meet. Biblical community is not instant chemistry or relational perfection. It's slow, spiritual formation that takes time, grace, patience, and forgiveness. When we place Jesus at the center and hold our expectations loosely, we allow our relationships to grow in healthy, sustainable ways.

Expect:

- *Imperfect people*
- *Awkward beginnings*
- *Opportunities to forgive*
- *Opportunities to show grace*
- *Commitment*

This is why Scripture repeatedly calls us to bear with one another.

*Colossians 3:13 says: “bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you...”*

Biblical community doesn't work because people are perfect. It works because forgiveness is practiced.

Community isn't something you find—it's something you build.

### **GIVE IT TIME**

We live in a culture that values speed, convenience, and instant results. But Biblical community doesn't grow like Amazon Prime shipping. Some of the strongest groups in our church began awkwardly or slowly. Many meaningful friendships develop over months, not weeks. If you give up too quickly, you might miss what God is trying to give you.

Consistency creates connection.  
Time creates trust.

### **ASK FOR HELP**

If you're struggling to find community, don't stay silent. Our pastors, ministry leaders, and Connections Team love helping people get connected. Often, we can see opportunities, fits, and open doors you might not.

## **STEP 2: UNDERSTAND THAT MOST RELATIONSHIPS ARE SEASONAL**

One of the most freeing realizations about community is understanding that relationships change with seasons. Just as our walk with Christ has highs and lows, and periods of growth and refinement, so does our life in community. Learning to embrace these seasons helps us stay healthy, flexible, and rooted in God's purposes rather than discouraged by change.

### **1. EVERY COMMUNITY HAS A SEASON**

Some friendships last a lifetime. Many last a year or a few years. Some are unique to moments of growth, trial, or transition. That doesn't make them less meaningful.

A season ending doesn't mean it wasn't valuable, it means it served its purpose.

*Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."*

This includes relationships.

God, in His sovereignty, brings people into our lives for specific purposes — growth, encouragement, refinement, even correction. When we understand this, we stop clinging to seasons God is closing and start trusting Him with what He is opening.

### **2. A CHANGING SEASON ISN'T A FAILED SEASON**

Living in a military town reminds us of this constantly. Friendships sometimes end abruptly— not because

something was wrong, but because life shifted. When we enter relationships with the right perspective, we are better prepared for their transition.

Seasons shift:

- *Kids are born*
- *Jobs change*
- *Schedules adjust*
- *People move*
- *Ministry rhythms transition*

Change is normal. Change is healthy. And change is often God's way of moving us into new growth.

### **3. HOLD RELATIONSHIPS OPEN-HANDED**

When we cling too tightly to a specific season of community, we can become resistant to what God wants to do next. Holding relationships with an open hand allows us to:

- *Celebrate the past*
- *Embrace the present*
- *Stay open to the new*

This posture keeps our hearts soft and grateful rather than anxious or bitter.

### **4. EVERY SEASON SHAPES THE CHARACTER OF A DISCIPLE**

God uses every relational season—long, short, joyful, painful—to shape Christlike character in us. Humility, patience, gratitude, grace, perseverance... none of these grow without the soil of real relationships.

# **STEP 3:**

## **A DISCIPLE BECOMES THE BIBLICAL COMMUNITY OTHERS NEED**

Most people enter community thinking about what they need. But one of the biggest spiritual shifts a disciple can make is learning to see community missionally—not as something we consume, but something we contribute to. Biblical community grows best when disciples show up ready to build up, not just to be built up.

### **1. DISCIPLES DON'T JUST CONSUME COMMUNITY, THEY CONTRIBUTE TO IT**

Sometimes we enter community looking for the “perfect friend”—someone who can meet every need, always understand us, help us grow, support us emotionally, and be available whenever we call. But that person doesn’t exist, and we could never be that person either.

A disciple understands:

Biblical community is not built on preference—it’s built on purpose.

*Philippians 2:3–4 puts it plainly: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves...”*

Biblical community begins to thrive the moment we stop asking, “Who is here for me?” and start asking, “Who has God placed me here for?”

## **2. A DISCIPLE LOOKS FOR SOMEONE TO BUILD UP**

Instead of entering community asking, “Who will meet my needs?”, a disciple asks:

- *“Who can I pray with this week?”*
- *“Who is new that I can welcome?”*
- *“Who needs encouragement?”*
- *“Who could I invite into my life?”*

This mindset transforms the entire community.

## **3. BIBLICAL HOSPITALITY BEGINS BY GOING FIRST**

Healthy community always begins with one person willing to go first.

Disciples go first:

- *First to invite*
- *First to encourage*
- *First to open their home*
- *First to extend grace*
- *First to forgive*

This is how Biblical community takes root.

# **STEP 4:**

## **BIBLICAL COMMUNITY REQUIRES INTENTIONALITY**

*(The Craigslist Treadmill Problem)*

Many people assume community “just happens.” But Biblical community is not automatic—it requires intentionality. A disciple cannot rely on good intentions; they must take real steps of faith.

Consider this:

If you browse Craigslist or Offer Up, you’ll find endless barely-used exercise equipment. Why?

Because buying a treadmill is easy.

Using one is hard.

Buying vegetables is easy.

Eating them is hard.

Relationships are the same.

Starting is easy. Maintaining takes sacrifice.

Biblical community requires:

- *Consistency*
- *Honesty*
- *Sacrifice*
- *Forgiveness*
- *Presence*
- *Perseverance*
- *Initiative*

You can't microwave Biblical community.

You can't DoorDash it.

You can't "subscribe" to it.

You build it through repeated steps of relational faithfulness.

Scripture calls us to this kind of intentional effort.

*Hebrews 10:24–25 says: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together... but encouraging one another..."*

Notice the language: consider, stir up, encourage.

None of that is passive.

Biblical community is something we actively pursue.

# STEP 5:

## TAKING RELATIONAL STEPS OF FAITH

Healthy Biblical community doesn't grow by inspiration—it grows by action. Small, faithful steps build deep, meaningful relationships.

Practical steps:

- *Show up every week*
- *Stay a little longer and talk*
- *Introduce yourself to someone new*
- *Join a serving team*
- *Invite someone to coffee or a meal*
- *Be honest about your life*
- *Pray with people*
- *Open your home*
- *Follow up*

These aren't just good ideas — they are biblical practices.

Romans 12:13 says:

*“Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.”*

These small habits sow the seeds of strong community.

# STEP 6:

## WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU STILL FEEL DISCONNECTED

Even after doing all the “right things,” disciples sometimes enter seasons where community feels distant. This doesn’t mean God is absent—in fact, He may be doing deep work in your life.

God may be:

- *Deepening your dependence*
- *Teaching perseverance*
- *Preparing you for leadership*
- *Shifting your season*
- *Building resilience*
- *Inviting you to create something new*

In these moments, it is important to remember that God is not distant.

*Psalm 34:18 says:*

*“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”*

Even when community feels distant, God is present — and often doing deeper work than we can see.

Don’t withdraw. Don’t isolate. Don’t quit.  
Keep engaging.

# **STEP 7:**

## **WHEN BIBLICAL COMMUNITY GOES WRONG (RECOGNIZING UNHEALTHY DYNAMICS)**

Even the healthiest groups can drift off-course if we're not watchful. Biblical community isn't immune to dysfunction—it must be guarded, protected, and corrected in love. Recognizing early warning signs helps prevent long-term damage and keeps Christ at the center.

### **1. WARNING SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY COMMUNITY**

- Negativity becomes the bond

The group unites around complaints instead of Christ.

- Gossip replaces honor

What looks like “processing” becomes character assassination.

- Backbiting and slander become normal

Sarcasm wounds. Prayer requests become gossip sessions. Criticism dominates.

- Wounds are rehearsed instead of healed

Biblical community moves toward forgiveness, not endless re-tellings.

- The circle closes in

Healthy community is open and welcoming—unhealthy community is closed, defensive, and cliquish.

Scripture gives strong warnings about this.

*Proverbs 16:28 says:*

*“A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends.”*

*And 1 Corinthians 15:33 reminds us:  
“Bad company ruins good morals.”*

Not all community is healthy — and not all community is worth staying in.

## **2. HOW A DISCIPLE REDEEMS A DRIFTING COMMUNITY**

When dysfunction appears, a disciple helps redirect the group back to:

- *Jesus at the center*
- *Scripture guiding discussion*
- *Guardrails around speech*
- *Confession replacing complaint*
- *Mission replacing preference*

If the group refuses to grow or change, stepping away may be necessary for your spiritual health.

# STEP 8:

## DON'T GIVE UP ON BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

Biblical community isn't perfect, fast, or frictionless.  
But it is essential.

It is one of the primary environments where God forms  
the character of a disciple.

It will stretch you.  
It will bless you.  
It will challenge you.  
It will change you.

The picture of Biblical community is not theoretical — it  
is visible.

*Acts 2:46–47 says:*

*“And day by day... they received their food with glad and  
generous hearts... and the Lord added to their number day  
by day those who were being saved.”*

This is what happens when Biblical community is lived out —  
joy, generosity, growth, and gospel impact.

Somewhere in this church—whether in a group, a ministry,  
a class, or a living room—Biblical community is waiting for  
you.

Don't give up on it.  
Don't give up on people.  
Don't give up on what God can do through intentional,  
Christ-centered relationships.



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