

C¹ onechurch

bigIdea

One of the most insidious lies that many have believed is that I can be a Christian and be okay with God and NOT be connected to the church and the people of God. That “Me and God can do this Christian thing without the church and without the people inside the church.” The problem is that You can’t be a growing Christian and not be connected to a church. Because life is too tough. Everyone gets discouraged. Everyone needs help. Everyone needs God, yes, but everyone needs other relationships.

BIG IDEA: Community is Essential for Commitment

ACTIVITY OPTION



Have everyone draw a horizontal timeline of his/her life in 5-year increments. Using a +5 to -5 scale vertically (with the beginning of timeline at 0), chart or graph low dips for low points, and high peaks for good times. Then have them draw a star on the graph where significant friendships or relationships were strong during that time and a dot where significant relationships were lost or broken. Discuss among yourselves what types of patterns and correlations you see on your graph.... how relationships do indeed affect you, and how the lack of friends can also have a great impact.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What’s the most common reason that people isolate themselves from church: (1) fear of being judged; (2) pain or loss that hasn’t been dealt with; (3) spiritual laziness; (4) other?
2. *Read Hebrews 10:19-25.* Why should we “draw near to God with a sincere heart”? Is emotion enough to sustain devotion, or is there another piece?
3. What is the key to not swerving in your Christian life? Would you say that you currently “hold unswervingly” to the hope you profess? Why or Why not?
4. *Read 1 Peter 5:8-9.* How does the Bible describe our enemy Satan? What are some of the things Satan uses to keep us afraid (hint: What is the animal doing?) When do lions roar—before or after the kill?
5. How can we keep ourselves from being lion food?

GOING DEEPER

Have everyone in the group answer the following:

1. Looking back, are there people you feel God providentially brought into your life at crucial times? Who? How did God use them? (If this is a couples’ group, ask if anyone has seen God providentially bring someone into one of their children’s lives.)

Ask for a few volunteers to answer the following:

2. Looking back, is there a time when you feel God brought someone across your path that could have helped you, but you resisted the relationship?

Allow those who have an answer to the following to share their stories:

3. Are there those in your circle of relationships that would say YOU are someone God providentially dropped into their lives?

Have two or three people read the following from two or three different translations: Proverbs 13:20.

4. What is the promise to those who “walk” with the wise?
5. What is the consequence of being a companion of fools?

Those were the easy questions. Think about this one.

6. Based on your experiences, why do you think Solomon highlights what a person *becomes* (i.e., “wise”) in the first half of the verse, while he highlights what will *happen* (i.e., “suffering harm”) in the second half?
7. Why didn’t he say, “He who walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools becomes a fool”?

At the end of his message, Andy made a statement that he has used for years when teaching students: “Your friends will determine the direction and quality of your life.”

8. Was that true for you when you were in school?
9. Is it still true or *as true* for you now that you are in a different stage of life?

As you close, ask each person in the group to pray a sentence prayer thanking God for a relationship he or she views as providential.