



**Series:** Free To ...

**Sermon Title:** Free to Share

**Date:** 8/13/2023

Early churches were often small gatherings of believers who met in people's homes. They spent time together eating, learning, celebrating, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus' resurrection, and supporting each other. The early church was a network of small groups! **Acts 2:42-47**

**Big Idea:** Grow spiritually by building Christian relationships

God never intended for us to live the Christian life alone- Just like the early church, He calls us to connect with and love others. You will never become the person God designed you to be without close Christian relationships. We will see three areas you are free to participate in when you are part of a small group.

### 1) FREE TO SHARE IN ACCOUNTABILITY

When we talk about accountability, we are talking about taking ownership of situations you are involved in. Being part of a small group allows us to do that in a healthy way. **James 5:16**

James writes about confessing sin – sin is anything you say, think, or do that opposes God. It's important to note that James is writing to believers, so he is not saying that to be forgiven by God, they need to confess their sins to others. **1 Timothy 2:5**

While we can't keep sins hidden from God, we can lie about them to others, lie about them to ourselves, and justify the reason we do them. The bottom line is covering up sin has negative consequences, as King David wrote in **Psalms 32**.

Having other men and women hold us accountable is a key step toward living the abundant life God has for you and avoiding the lure of sin.

**FREE TO GROW IN DEEPER KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

**Acts 2:42, Colossians 3:16**

There are 59 “one another” passages in the New Testament that teach us how to relate to one another. The New Testament is clear that God’s followers are to be in close relationship with one another – which includes learning from His word. You may learn more about God in a small group than in any other area of your life – because unlike studying on your own or in a church service, in a small group, you can ask questions!

When you are around other Christians, they can also bring out perspectives about God that you hadn’t thought of yourself. If you are going through a difficult situation, that can point out where God is working. Others might be able to see God’s hand when you cannot or offer biblical advice for a situation you are going through. **Proverbs 15:22**

### **FREE TO BE TRUSTWORTHY**

Have you ever been betrayed and had a secret about you spread around? On the other hand, have you ever had the confidence that when you told confidential information to someone, they kept their mouth shut and never told anyone else? That kind of trust is what is needed in a small group. When you are connected with other Christians, and they trust you with secret information (even if you are not a leader in the group), you must keep it to yourself. Internal maturity happens when you are trusted to keep the information quiet. **Proverbs 11:13**

When someone gives you trusted information- be a secure lockbox. Keep the contents in. Be the type of person who is trustworthy and avoid the temptation to “share” that information with others so they can pray for the individual. If that person wants others praying, then he or she can get it added to our Grace prayer chain. You can sign up for the prayer chain at

**PRAYER@GRACE4FAMILIES.COM**

Small Groups today are often viewed merely as a program within the church, but they are so much more than that. They are an opportunity for you to grow spiritually by allowing others to feed into you and for you to feed into others. You can only go so far in your spiritual walk by yourself. God designed His church to be a community with each other.

**Hebrews 10:25**

### Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **List some obstacles that keep people from joining a small group. Are there realistic solutions to help them join a small group?**
- **The early church was essentially a network of small groups. Do you believe that churches should return to that model? Why or why not.**
- **Have you seen the benefits of accountability in your life? Explain**
- **Is it ever appropriate to share confidential information without permission? Explain**