

Leadership Tip!

Life groups are a great place to help people overcome the fear of praying openly.

Consider asking members in advance to pray before or at the end of group.

Often the chance to gather their thoughts is the only barrier they really have.

IMAGINE - *BELONGING*

STARTER QUESTIONS:

**What do you like best about going to church?
(e.g. people, music/praise, prayer, learning, et cetera...)**

What do you think is the best part of this Life Group?

MAIN IDEA:

We are currently in a series titled “Imagine”, and this week we are looking at belonging and connecting into God’s community. Imagine what life could feel like if we connected with other people the way that God wants us to instead of the way we allow.

During the message James listed three different places in the Bible that show we were created to belong in a community.

Why do you think God created us for community?

Read Hebrews 10:25

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The book of Hebrews says that Christians should meet regularly. We should feel that we belong to a community and find a home in that community. Belonging in a community helps us by providing a purpose for our lives and gives us others to lean on when life is hard. Belonging is about facing life’s problems together with our community.

James listed several purposes for having community to include: strengthen each other, facing life’s problems together, help each other focus on God, develop and use our talents, and to help each other find our passions and take action on it.

NOTE: Have a good discussion among your group about what the purpose of community is.

Read Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another

People sharpen each other through exchanging information, discussing issues and critiquing each other's ideas. Different people can bring different perspectives and strengths to a discussion. Like a knife blade rubbed on steel, this process in a friendship may sometimes cause the sparks to fly! Yet the result is good. A true friend sharpens and inspires the personality of his or her friend.

Read Ephesians 4:11-12

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Both the Proverbs and Ephesians passages discuss benefits of belonging in God's community. In community we can learn to use the gifts we were given to help advance the kingdom of God and we can learn how other believers can help us hone our gifts.

Have life group members share their passions and ask how those passions could be used to further God's kingdom. This discussion can be used to help others realize that some may share the same passions and also for members to learn a little bit more about each other.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

Intentional relationships are essential if we want to become more like Jesus and have a sense of belonging. Life Groups help us sharpen our love for God and people through studying the Bible, serving others, and building lasting friendships.

Imagine what life is like when we connect with our Community the way that God wants us to instead of the way we allow.

CLOSE IN PRAYER**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE:**

1Corinthians 12:27

1Peter 4:10

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Coastal Luncheon – January 15th @12:15pm in Building B

101 CONNECT – January 22nd from 2 to 4pm in Building B

<http://www.vbcoastal.com/volunteers/>

IMAGINE
Belonging
January 8, 2017

1. We all want to belong, because we were created to belong.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." Genesis 1:1-2 (NLT)

"In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God."

John 1:1-2 (NLT)

"So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground." Genesis 1:27-28 (NLT)

2. Belonging requires two things: Community and Purpose.

- The community found at church resembles family.

"God's unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure."

Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)

"God has given us the privilege of being born again so that we are now members of God's own family." 1 Peter 1:3a (LB)

"That family is the church of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth."

1 Timothy 3:15b (NCV)

- The purpose of the community is to...
 - a. Help strengthen each others faith
 - b. Face life's problems together
 - c. Focus our thoughts on God
 - d. Develop & use talents to serve others
 - e. Find a cause we are passionate about and do something about it.

3. You don't find belonging if all you do is show up, you have to engage.

How to engage:

1. Attend Coastal Luncheon - January 15th @ 12:15 in Building B
2. Attend 101 CONNECT – January 22nd @ 2-4pm in Building A
3. Find a place to serve – App or Website and fill out an info sheet
4. Find a life group – Visit the Connection Center