



CONNECT DEEPLY
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The Crossing Church
Las Vegas, Nevada

OPENING

This week we are continuing our series called Life on Mission where we are talking about the mission that God has given us, both individually and as a church. Our hope is that it will help us out of our faith funk and get us back on mission after a year and a half of lethargy and possibly apathy. We began with a study on **Gathering Purposefully** in Week #1 and **Serving Selflessly** in Week #2 and we will be talking about three more spiritual practices that will get us moving again and help our faith flourish – as we learn this week to **Connect Deeply** together.

SCRIPTURE¹

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:44-46 All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts

Proverbs 27:6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

2 Corinthians 2:9 However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived" — the things God has prepared for those who love him

Hebrews 10:23-25 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

OBSERVATION

Five spiritual practices are found and lived out in the Book of Acts which is the story of the very first Christians and churches. What we will see is that they lived their lives on mission – the mission that Jesus gave to them. This is how the Book of Acts begins forty days after Jesus' resurrection. During that forty days between when Jesus rose from the dead and went up to heaven, He appeared to different people in different places, not only to convince them that He was alive, but to instruct them about what to do next. It had to do with gathering together – they had been scattered out of fear and run for their lives, but now He was back and they re-gathered. The early followers of Jesus devoted themselves to fellowship. Their "shared life" or Koinonia, which is the Greek word for marriage, is used twenty times in the New Testament as disciples shared worship, prayer, food, service, joy and love together. This tells us about the power of relationship in fellowship. The world calls this "synergy" and defines it as "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." We call it the working of the Holy Spirit among us!!

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is NIV

QUESTION: As you fellowship with other Christians, what characteristics of relationships, i.e. marriage, are you also experiencing in fellowship?

God uses relationships to grow our faith. Think about it – if anybody could do life on His own it was Jesus, yet He had a small group of disciples around Him to share the Mission.

QUESTION: Who are the people you have gathered around you to share the mission? Why have you chosen them?

APPLICATION

To help us evaluate ourselves in this study of sharing life missions, we are going to do two things: **1) Study the Johari Window; and 2) Look at a passage from the Book of Hebrews that will shine a light on this shared life.**

The Johari Window is made up of four quadrants that all of us have in our lives. The first is called the **Arena** which is defined as “What I know about you and what you know about you.” What you look like, your personality, the public you.” Unfortunately, most of us don’t get beyond this public person - we try our hardest to control what others think about us and this is especially true when it comes to our spiritual lives. The Pharisees were really good at this. The second quadrant is called “The **Mask** which is the part of our lives that we know you don’t know.” This is where the secrets reside. There are things about us that others don’t know - but they need to know them so we can be held accountable to people we trust – those who will tell us the unvarnished truth about our situations – people who can help us through it. C. S. Lewis said, “Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, ‘What! You, too? I thought I was the only one.’” This is the person with whom we can take the mask off.

QUESTION: Who are the people in your life who can speak truth to you?

The third quadrant is **blind spots** which are “What we see, but you don’t see. It’s like the spinach in our teeth. All of us have an area of our lives that everybody else sees, but we don’t. People love to give their opinions and tell us everything we’re doing wrong. But when someone one who loves us and is for us has such an opinion, we need to hear it because they see the hard truth and can be trusted.

QUESTION: How do you typically react to criticism or hard truth?

QUESTION: How do you react to the most trusted person in your life when they speak hard truth? What makes the difference in how you react?

The last quadrant, **Potential**, says, “I don’t know you and you don’t know you either.” We have not experienced the best version of us and that doesn’t happen when we have our masks on or when we refuse to acknowledge our blind spots. The best version of us happens in community.

QUESTION: In what ways are you “in community” today? Are they in church fellowships or different environments where they commune with others?

Hebrews 10:23-24 is the Scripture mentioned before. The unknown author tells us to hold on unswervingly to our faith and to think about how we can “encourage one another toward love and good deeds.” When we drive our cars, swerving is not good – it means we are straying from appropriate paths and endangering others as well as ourselves. We need friends to be bringing us back to foundationally good driving as rumble strips do. Our church has a group of Elders who are rumble strips who are accountable to each other and our congregation and keep us from swerving away from our journey with Jesus. They share highs and lows, challenges and struggles. This is the shared life – it is the power of encouraging and showing up for one another. When people drift from their community of faith first – it’s only a matter of time before they drift from their faith. Being connected to a community of faith grows our faith .

QUESTION: What does a “shared life” look like to you?

We have many opportunities to grow spiritually here at The Crossing: Rooted and Alpha, and Redit, Financial Peace University, ways to serve others and, of course, life groups. All are beginning again in September and provide opportunities to meet people and build relationships and community. Everybody needs to be needed.

Everybody needs to be known. Here is the place to start. The place to meet Jesus on a more personal level and the place to serve Him as we connect deeply together.

QUESTION: What new experiences in service and training at the Crossing are you considering for this upcoming Fall session?

QUESTION: Which of your friends will you invite to join with you?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, Your Son shows us how to live together in unity, community and fellowship. As we serve in Your Name and for Your glorify, we lift each other up in love and encouragement to run the race to the end. We thank You for our Church where we see people's lives change and faith grows. In Jesus' name, Amen.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION: As you fellowship with other Christians, what characteristics of relationships, i.e. marriage, are you also experiencing in fellowship?

QUESTION: Who are the people you have gathered around you to share the mission? Why have you chosen them?

QUESTION: Who are the people in your life who can speak truth to you?

QUESTION: How do you typically react to criticism or hard truth?

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