



Connect

October 4, 2026

Read & Reflect

READ: 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 10:24–25, Romans 15:7, Colossians 1:18–20

Following Jesus connects us both to **God and His people**. Scripture calls Christians to intentionally encourage, welcome, honor, and strengthen one another while keeping Jesus—not the church itself—as the foundation of our hope.

Understand the Moment

God often uses other people to see potential in us that we can't see ourselves. A word of encouragement, an invitation, or simply giving someone a place to belong can change the direction of a life.

But churches are made of imperfect people. Sometimes those people encourage us; sometimes they hurt us.

That's why our deepest connection must always be to Jesus. **Christ is the head of the church**. As we connect with Him, He teaches us how to become a community where wounded and imperfect people can experience encouragement, belonging, healing, and hope.

Process Together or Alone

- Who has seen something in you that you couldn't see in yourself?
- When have you experienced genuine belonging in a church or Christian community?
- What makes moving from church attendance to genuine connection difficult?
- How has disappointment with Christians affected your relationship with God or His church?
- Who around you might currently feel like an outsider?

Follow Jesus This Week

Listen

- Where might God be inviting you into deeper connection?
- Who is He putting on your heart to encourage?

Obey

- What step can you take from simply attending toward genuinely belonging?
- How could you intentionally “build someone up” this week?

Share

- Who needs to know there is a place for them among God's people?
- Who could you personally invite into a group, conversation, meal, or serving opportunity?

Care

- Who do you know who has been wounded by Christians or the church?
- How can you listen to their story and pray for them without dismissing their hurt?



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Live It Out

Practice three simple sentences this week:

I SEE YOU.

Notice something God has placed in another person and tell them.

YOU BELONG.

Look for someone on the outside and intentionally make room for them.

THERE IS HOPE.

When someone shares a struggle, don't rush past it. Listen, pray, and point them toward Jesus.

Write down the name of one person for each statement and intentionally connect with them this week.

Remember: Connecting isn't simply finding a church where you belong. It's becoming the kind of person who helps someone else belong.

Pray

- Thank God for the people who have encouraged, welcomed, and invested in you.
- Ask God to show you someone who needs encouragement this week.
- Pray for people who feel lonely, overlooked, wounded, or disconnected from church.
- Ask God to bring healing where you have experienced church hurt or disappointment.
- Pray that Lighthouse would increasingly become a community where people connect deeply with Jesus and genuinely belong with His people.

Thank You for welcoming me into Your family through Jesus. Help me stay deeply connected to You and teach me how to connect authentically with Your people. Open my eyes to those who feel unseen or like they don't belong. Give me words that build people up, a heart that welcomes others, and the courage to stop when someone needs to be heard. Heal the wounds Your imperfect people sometimes cause, and keep our hope centered completely on Jesus. Use me to help someone else discover that they are seen, welcomed, and loved. Amen.

Group Leader Optional Questions

Opening Question:

Who is someone who believed in you before you really believed in yourself?

Closing Reflection:

Who could experience a greater sense of belonging because you intentionally connected with them this week?