

Neighborhood Group Vision (Part 3): “Love Your Neighbor Within Your Group”

Acts 2:42-27

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Acts 2:42-47 is descriptive and arguably prescriptive of how the Church is to love God and neighbors better. The early church created the rhythms (practices) of life that are needed to grow as followers of Jesus. It reveals how we can learn to love God and neighbors in our groups better. These are simple practices that produce profound transformation. Do you want to learn to love God and neighbors better?

Study Guide Qs

- 1. Review the seven ways that the early church in Ac. 2:42-47 loved God and neighbors. How do you believe that these rhythms (practices) help people to love God and neighbors within their group better?**
- 2. Reflect about your group experience to date. In which of the rhythms has your group seemed strong?**
- 3. Which of the rhythms have helped you to grow in your love for God and neighbors?**
- 4. Which rhythm(s) do you believe that your NG should focus on more in the coming season?**

subject: loving my neighbors within my group

objective: love God and my neighbors better

I. practices of loving my neighbor within my group (vv. 42-47a)

A. learning the bible together (v. 42a)

1. “apostle’s doctrine” = Scripture/Bible/Word of God

B. living life together (v. 42b)

1. “fellowship” = Greek “koinonia” = loving community; deep relationship

C. celebrating communion together (v. 42c)

1. “breaking of bread” = refers to communion/Lord’s supper

D. praying together (v. 42d)

1. “fear” = holy reverence; honor; respect

E. caring for one another together (vv. 44-45)

“Rejoice w/those who rejoice, & weep w/those who weep.” (Romans 12:15)

F. worshiping together (v. 46a)

G. eating together (v. 46b)

II. payoffs for loving my neighbor within my group (v. 47)

A. praise for God (v. 47a)

B. a good witness (v. 47b)

“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
(John 13:35)

C. salvation (v. 47c)

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Intro. Acts 2:42-47 is descriptive and arguably prescriptive of how the Church is to love God and neighbors better. The early church created the rhythms of life that are needed to grow as followers of Jesus. It reveals how we can learn to love God and neighbors in our groups better. These are simple practices that produce profound transformation. Do you want to learn to love God and neighbors better?

Subject: loving neighbors within your group

Object: love God and neighbors better

Context: NG Vision [Matt. 22:37-39] to saturate our community with Christ-centered NGs where we learn to love God and neighbors better

A. How to love neighbors within your group better [Ac. 2:42-47] 7 ways

1. Learn the Bible together [42] And they continued steadfastly in the apostles'

doctrine: Scripture-based study guides related to the Sunday sermon help you to engage in active Bible learning, and align our church in a common growth trajectory. Sharing what you are learning from the Bible encourages and helps the group to grow in love for God and neighbors.

2. Share life together [42] fellowship means sharing life in common. Have fun with people in your group and share life. Play a game during your group. Plan an activity together. Plan a time to watch sports together or go see a movie. Recreation is a great way to strengthen relationships. **Gemini St + Cocoa, Wii*

3. Share communion together [42] in the breaking of bread [The Lord's Supper]

Create rhythms in the group for believers to share communion together while being sensitive that unbelievers in the group will not be invited to participate. Remembering what God has done for us, especially at the cross helps to keep groups gospel-centered rather than performance based.

** We did this together for the first time last week as we reflected upon responding to the gospel and God's love for us, especially as displayed at the cross.*

4. Pray together [42] and in prayers: Praying together in your group, and for one another during the week is one of the most loving things you can do for one another, and creates unity among the group. **Ja. 5:16** Pray for one another

* We generally end our NG by praying for one another's needs (or neighbors), we have someone in the group send a typed list of the prayer requests,.

5. Care together [44] Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

a. Empathy and compassion [Rom. 12:15, Gal. 6:2] Where empathy is seeking to enter an experience from another's perspective, compassion is seeking to provide a sense of relief to a person, especially someone who is struggling. Examples of this love in action include: listening, praying, and caring. Being involved in a NG is a place to develop biblically healthy relationships where we are cared for, and where we care for others. Too often people feel disconnected, isolated, or not cared for. When we are struggling we need people who care.

b. Serve one another: For example babysitting, bringing a meal, helping clean their home, or helping with an expense can be ways to care for one another.

c. Visiting the sick: When someone in the group is ill or at the hospital, how nice for people in a group to offer to visit.

d. Support a missionary: Some NG will decide to "adopt" a missionary. Designate someone in the group to stay in contact with the missionary to find out prayer requests and needs. Spend time praying for the missionary and seek to meet a need as the Lord would lead. Make a video of the group encouraging the missionary or make an audio or video call to the missionary if that is possible.

6. Worship together as part of a larger assembly [46] So continuing daily with one accord in the temple Encourage your NG to be part of a larger assembly that worships together with the purpose of magnifying God; and learning to love God and neighbors better.

7. Share meals together [46] breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart: Throughout the gospels we see life and

transformation as people gather with Jesus for meals. Meals create opportunities to unite, and share not only food but life.

* We serve food at our NG, every week 2 people bring food (sweet and savory), BBQ in October, and can't wait till the temps warm up and we can BBQ with our NG and invite other neighbors.

B. The desired results of loving God and neighbors better [47] Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

1. God is praised: Praising God: An end result of NGs are people who grow in their love for God, and thus praise of our glorious God who dwells with man.

2. Good witness: Favor with all the people: We want to be transformed in our love for God and neighbors so that we establish a good witness. We want favor with people based on our tangible and unconditional love for them. Loving them is not a program or project but a value that Christ has commanded.

3. People will be saved: The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved: When we actually live the values of loving God and neighbors people will be far more receptive to the gospel message. Over time, we will adopt and live these values more and more. We will create margin in our lives to join a group, to befriend and build relationship with neighbors where we live, work, study, and play. Neighbors within and outside of our group. And we trust that God by His Holy Spirit will use us, in due time, to help people know and experience the love of God we so greatly enjoy.