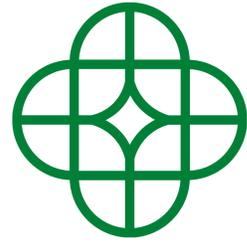


Community



Study Guide



Introduction

We live in a culture where everything is disposable. Our plates are disposable, cups are disposable, and almost everything else we use regularly can be bought in a single use form. It's all limited and its all expendable. It's even to the point where people are disposable. If we need new friends we can just throw the old ones out. Facebook will give us new people to connect with and we can move on. If you don't like your partner or the person you're dating you can download an app and swipe away until you find someone new. If your church isn't meeting your needs or you just want to shake things up you can drive a few blocks down the road and attend a new one. Everything is disposable, expendable, and replaceable.

The results of this are that we live in a culture that is overflowing with ways to connect but in a proverbial drought of actual connection and relationships. We know people but we really don't know anyone. We have friendships but they're shallow, situational, and lacking any real commitment. We're deprived of true connection and it not only happens in our world but its even saturated into the church. We've manipulated our expectations and perspective on the church to reflect what it can do for me, and what it offers to me, instead of the connections made and the people invested in. Our value in our church has shifted from a biblical perspective of partnership to a shallower version of preference and convenience.

Over the next three weeks we're going to be talking about what real relationships look like. We'll dig into the biblical importance of real relationships, the way the scripture encourages us to build these types of relationships, and the value those relationships can bring into our life when we've truly invested.

In the pages that follow you'll find resources for each week to dig in deeper to the topic we're discussing. You'll find notes for that week's sermon. As you listen again throughout the week online or through the app you'll be able to file in key statements and have reference to all the major passages we reference.

After that you'll find a devotional study to read at some point through the week. This will be a deeper dive into a related topic to our discussion that week. This is a chance to take a facet or portion of what we talked about and not only go into deeper content around it, but find fuller and more specific ways for you to apply it to your daily life.

You'll also find more verses and quotes that go along with the topic and even some questions to go through as a group or by yourself. There is also unique content for each week you can work through.

As we dive in as a community and as you work through some of this content on your own we hope you find the meaning, value, and path forward to healthy, meaningful relationships.



Week 1: The Community of the Church
Acts 2:42-47

We feel so alone even though we're so connected. Even in the church we feel this way. We show up on Sunday, we have our services, drink a cup of coffee, share some small talk and then leave. Maybe we're in a small group, maybe we're in a serving team, maybe not. Either way its still really easy to feel alone in the church. Is this what Jesus intended? Is this what the church was supposed to look like? Were we supposed to etch out an hour a week, stare at a stage, call it church, and move on? Or was there something more? In the beginning of the church we see something unique. We see something different. They weren't just people who got together for a service, they were a community. So we're going to look at a passage today and see what we can pull out to maybe help us go from a church service to a church community.

They Prioritized _____.

They were devoted to the apostles teaching and to attending temple.
The early church valued the emphasis and direction of God's truth.
Hebrews 4:12 - "The word of God is living and active"
2 Timothy 3:16-17 - Profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training.
Do you prioritize God's word in your life and in your church relationships?

They Prioritized _____.

They fellowshiped, broke bread together, met in each others homes and had all in common
The Early Church prioritized valued their relationships with each other.
1 Peter 4:8 - Love earnestly
Romans 12:10 - Outdo one another in showing honor
Ephesians 5:1-2 Walk in love
Do your relationships with people matter?

They Prioritized _____.

Awe came upon everyone, they had favor with all the people, and God added to their numbers.
The Early Church valued mission to create unity
Romans 10:13-14 - How will they hear?

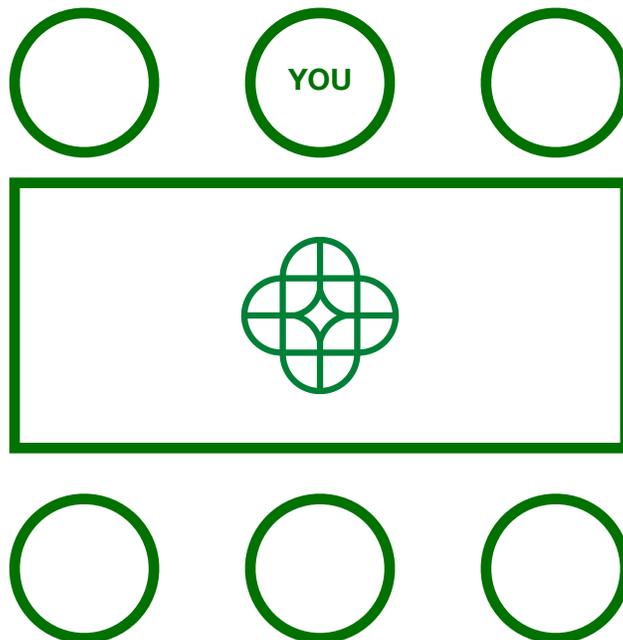
Where are you finding community? Have you plugged into church in a real way? What steps can you take towards getting plugged in and starting to create the kind of connections you were made for.

The Tangible

Who would you consider the people closest to you? Are they people in your church or from another area of life? Do you think you need to invest more in the church community based on the exercise below?

Who is at my table?

Take a minute and think through this one. You've found yourself at the end of your life. Unexpectedly you've been diagnosed and after you've been able to speak to your family and inform them, who are the people you'd want to share with first? You get one table in the room with six seats at it. Besides your family, who would you call and ask to see?



Once you've got your people filled out think about what they represent. Think about where those relationships developed and what they're built on. Were any of your relationships built on mutual faith? They may not attend your personal church but are any of them part of the big "C" Church? Are the 5 people you'd want to see and talk to one more time people who share the community of faith?

Mid-Week Devotional

King David's Friendships

In the old testament there is a group of men who often get overlooked. In the middle of King David's story about rising from a shepherd boy to the king of all Israel, scripture makes a few references to a group of men who always had David's back. These were the David's "Mighty Warriors." They were the ones who went to war with him, hid in the wilderness with him, and stood by his side throughout his struggle to claim what God said was His.

The mighty men aren't usually mentioned but they were crucial to David's rise and his ability to finally become king of all of Israel. In the list we find in 2 Samuel 23 we learn that there are over 30 men around David and his family who were devoted to helping David accomplish what God had called him to do.

This list of men, repeated with some variations in 1 Chronicles 11:10-47, were the men David leaned on. They did amazing feats to help David win wars. One of David's mighty men, Joab, actually killed David's son during an attempted insurrection. Another would kill some 300 men with a single spear while others we know little to nothing about except that at the end of David's life he knew he had a group of Warriors he wanted everyone to know about because of how much they helped him.

Can you imagine how different your life would be if you had, maybe not thirty plus but even four or five people behind you. Can you imagine the confidence you'd have knowing there were a few "warriors" in your corner? David had 30 plus men and he took over a kingdom. Imagine what your life would look like if you had a few good men or women helping encourage and strengthen and fight battle with you.

In our culture it's hard to find relationships like this. We find a great deal of relationships that come with strings attached. There are no limits of people who will connect when it's mutually beneficial. You can even find people who will fight for you, as long as they get something from it. But to find people who are in your corner, no matter what is hard to find. There has to be something greater there. That type of unity has to come from more than mutual hobbies, shared work space, or a likable personality. It has to be more.

The men who followed David loved David, but they weren't there because they loved him. They trusted David, but they weren't so diligent because they trusted him. They were faithful because they believed in the cause. God's plan and his mission to make David the king was the driving factor that kept this group of men together even when David did wrong by them. They weren't devoted to an empty promise or to a fallible man. They were devoted to God's plan.

When we gather as the church, the body of believers we come together because God has a plan. He has a purpose for each of us. We are called to a greater mission and when the church unites the way we are called to, supports one another the way we are called to, when we fight for each other the way we are called to then we find an army of warriors behind us. We find that overcoming temptation, dealing with doubt, and overcoming addiction are still a battle but it's a battle we fight with our mighty warriors behind us.

Are you going into battle alone? Are you trying to live your faith by yourself? What's stopping you from finding your mighty warriors and tackling what God has called you to be?



Week 2: No Masks Allowed
Ephesians 4:25-27

It's not easy to be yourself around people. Sometimes it is because we're embarrassed. Sometimes it's because we are afraid. Sometimes our guard goes up simply because of habit. We keep people away and at a distance to make sure we're safe. We create facades of ourself to show the world. smaller, less fragile images of who we are and we hide behind them. We hope people will accept the image we project and won't peek behind the curtain. This leads to shallow, empty relationships. This leads to being around so many people but still feeling so helplessly alone. So what can we do? How can we make develop real connections and make real relationships with people? What does the Bible say to me about my struggle to be honest about who I am and vulnerable in my relationships?

Step one: _____ **(25)**

We live behind a facade we want people to see.
Proverbs 18:1 "whoever isolates himself"
We end up completely alone surrounded by people.

"Sometimes they story we're telling the world isn't hard as endearing as the one that lives inside us."
Donald Miller

Signs you may be faking it.
You act different around different people.
You silo areas of your life.
You feel anxiety and stress a lot

Step two: _____ **(26)**

Real connections require Real work
1 Peter 3:8 - Having unity of mind
Proverbs 12:16 - The prudent ignore insults
Galatians 5:14-15 - Biting and devouring one another

"I no longer believe love works like a fairy tale but like farming. It is getting up early, tilling the soil, and then praying for rain."
Donald Miller

Step three: _____ **(27)**

We dispose of relationships instead of protecting them.
Protect what matters.
2 Corinthians 13:11 - Aim for restoration
Ephesians 4:1-3 - Eager for unity
Things we allow to ruin relationships
Fear
inconvenience
Discomfort

Conflict
Apathy

Conclusion:
"We divide easily because we love shallowly."
Francis Chan

The Tangible

We all walk around carrying three identities. The first is who we feel like we are inside. This is the person we most often keep to ourselves and hide from most people. It includes our fears, insecurities, and broken perspective of ourselves.

Next we carry around the identity we want other people to see. This is the person we don't always feel like but want to be seen as by others. This might be smart, qualified, put together, or confident. We may not feel that way, but we do our best to project like to others.

Lastly an unfortunately our most neglected identity is who God says you are. We don't often feel this way, and sometimes don't even know what he says about us, but it's nonetheless the identity we need to stand most confidently on as we begin trying to build healthy and authentic relationships.

In the boxes below write out a few things that describe who you feel like you are, who you want to be seen as, and who God says you really are.

Who I feel like I am	Who I want people to see me as	Who God says I am
inadequate	Qualified	Called and loved.

This week, take some time to find some scriptures that tell you about your identity in Christ. Some examples are fellow citizens with the saints (Eph 2:9), Blessed (2 For 9:8), heard (1 Pt 3:12), forgiven (1 John 1:9), and adopted (Galatians 3:26-29). Write what you find in the blank space below.

Mid-Week Devotional

With friends like that, who needs enemies?

Proverbs 27:6 “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, profuse are the the kisses of an enemy.”

Its so extremely easy to find people who will tell you what you want to hear. It's almost considered rude in our current culture to be honest with someone. Telling someone the truth, even if that truth might hurt their feelings or upset them has become taboo. This change not only allowed so many people to walk down ugly avoidable paths but its also cheapened our relationships. Now, friends are to nod in silence as they see you making terrible choices. Friends are not friends if they don't support or agree with your decisions. We've put muzzles over the mouth of truth and instead turned up the volume on the people pleasing analog of vain applause and approvals.

Now, before I go any further, we must address the obvious. There is a major difference between telling someone the truth and being a jerk about it. You can be completely truth but still be completely wrong in your delivery. 1 Corinthians 14:3 tells us that when we speak it should be for edification or for building up. Ephesians 4:15 encourages us to speak truth but it says to do so in love. So no matter what we do not have an excuse to boldly spout and shout truths at people regardless and inconsiderate of the consequences. We are however called to speak the truth in a way that encourages others, builds them up, and makes them more like Christ.

So what does this verse, Proverbs 27:6, mean when it hails the wounds of friends and condemns kisses from an enemy?

Well what this verse is telling us is that I'd rather hear a harsh truth from my friend than an empty complement from someone who doesn't care about me. Id rather have relationships where people are honest (in love unto edification) with me rather than have people around who say sweet things but watch me wander into destruction. Paul actually warns Timothy of this in 2 Timothy 4:3 where he says people will have “itchy ears.” They will seek out teaching and churches who tell them what they want to hear. They'll long for kisses of enemies rather than wounds from a friend.

Who in your life have you given permission to “wound” you? Who have you allowed to say harsh things that you may not like but need to be said for your edification and betterment. This doesn't mean we always agree or follow their advice. However it does mean that we've given them permission to be close enough that they can say it and that we will listen because we know they love us and have our best interest in mind.

When was the last time you checked in with this person about your life, struggle, and decisions?

We all need relationships like this, and multiple of them. Who in your life are you bringing in close enough to have the real, hard, and honest conversations with?



Week 3: Two Are Better Than One.
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

We've spent two weeks now digging into what real relationships in the church should look like. In week one we looked at the values and priorities of real relationships in the church. In week two we looked at the barriers and facades we all tend to put up and what we could do to remove those. This week we are looking at what benefits, rewards, and blessings we can find in this type of community.

Community Provides _____.

You're not at this all alone.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 - Encourage and build each other up.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - Stir up one another.

Hebrews 3:13 - Encourage one another

Cutting a dado by hand or with a router?

Are you supporting/being supported by community?

Community Provides _____.

We all need a place where we can be ourselves.

Pastors who care for you.

Acts 20:28 - Shepherds care for the flock

People to work along with you

Romans 12:5 - One body with many members

Mentors and advisors

Titus 2:2-8 - Older men and women encourage the younger

When you can be yourself and know people are looking out for you there is peace

Community Provides _____.

No one is in more danger than an isolated believer.

From myself

From temptation

From the enemy

Our safety comes from

Blind spots covered

Wisdom, counsel, and advice

Greater accountability

Who is watching your back?

Conclusion:

"Some Christians try to go to Heaven alone, in solitude. But believers are not compared to bears or lions or other animals that wander alone. Those who belong to Christ are sheep in this respect, that they love to get together. Sheep go in flocks, and so do God's people."

Charles Spurgeon

The Tangible

We all need a community. We all need people around us who can encourage us in our faith and help us stay strong in the midst of all kinds of adversity. Those type of relationships don't just happen over night though. They take time and have to be developed and built. What can we do to build these then?

1. Join a community group here at Origins. We cannot stress this enough. Sunday morning services are not the way to develop community. Attending a service won't build your circle. Getting into a group and making real connections will. If you aren't in a group sign up for one. You can do this on the website or the app.
2. Start spending intentional one on one time with some people. Grab a coffee, go to dinner, hang out around a fire. What you do doesn't matter as long as you're being intentional about making room in your life to invest in people.
3. Try sharing interesting articles, verses, or songs with people and ask them to tell you what they think. This can open up conversations with people about topics, events, and struggles in their life you may never have known about.
4. Be consistent and be intentional. No one is perfect at relationships. When we work at them though and start to develop them, we find that they aren't as scary or difficult as we imagined.

Who are you going to invest in? Write the names of this individuals down below. In the space provided try and think of how you are going to start being intentional and developing that relationship.

More scripture on Community

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Romans 12:3-6

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them

1 Thessalonians 5:14

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

Matthew 18:20

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

1 Corinthians 12:25-27

That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

Colossians 3:13

Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

