

*Week* **Four.**  
PEOPLE TO DO LIFE WITH

# 04

It's easy to drift away from the church, especially with the disruption that COVID forced on our normal routines. We don't need to go; we can watch online. We won't be missed. We unconsciously adopted a new normal with reordered priorities and church has fallen down on the list. But church is essential.

The Bible teaches that it must be a high priority in our lives, or we will miss out on some very important benefits that will affect both our spiritual life and our quality of life. God wants to meet us in the gathering of his people, where he will sustain us, strengthen us, teach us and give us a story and a purpose for our lives. We are better together!

# Introduction.

The Church is a spiritual community - a family. Within the church we find people who will love us and accept us. Yet, in our society, we live among people who are isolated, lonely and feel like their relationships are not meaningful. How sad! Jesus has made us one through our faith in him. He's given us people who will love us, encourage us and be with us when life gets hard. Within the church we find people to do life with, and it is a gift.

## Starter Questions

Have you ever struggled with loneliness? If so, what was going on in your life at the time? How did you come out of that lonely season? What's it like to look back at it?

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Have you ever had a great small group experience? Why was that group such a great experience?

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What's one idea from this week's sermon that impacted you or how have you responded to the Call to Action?

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# *Into the Word.*

## 1. READ 2 TIMOTHY 4:9-14

Paul mentions eight fellow disciples in just a few verses. What are some observations you can make from these verses about Paul's community?

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## 2. READ JESUS' PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH IN JOHN 17:20-23

What is the "glory" mentioned in v.22? What does it mean for Jesus' followers to be "perfectly one" and why is this so important to Jesus? What's the intended outcome of people unified in doing life together?

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# *Into the* **Word.**

## **3. IN ACTS 4:32-37**

It's clear that the early disciples in Jerusalem were doing life together. What was it like to be a part of that gathering? How did they express their love for Jesus and each other? How did their commitment to each other become obvious to the people around them, and what was the result (Acts 5:12-13)?

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## **4. READ HEBREWS 10:22-25**

Notice the three "let us" statements. What are they? How are they related to each other? Why is the third statement so important to the first two? What are the benefits to us when we "meet together" (v.25) regularly?

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# Application.

1. Community can be messy. People are not perfect. Have you ever had Paul's experience in close relationships? Some good, some bad? How have those experiences impacted your own relationships? How can past hurts be overcome so that present relationships can flourish?

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2. In what ways could this group you are part of experience being "perfectly one"? Is it possible to be "one" with people from whom you are disconnected? What's the best way for us to participate in Jesus' prayer being fulfilled?

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3. In what ways would you like to see your small group imitate the gathering of disciples in Acts 2:42-44?

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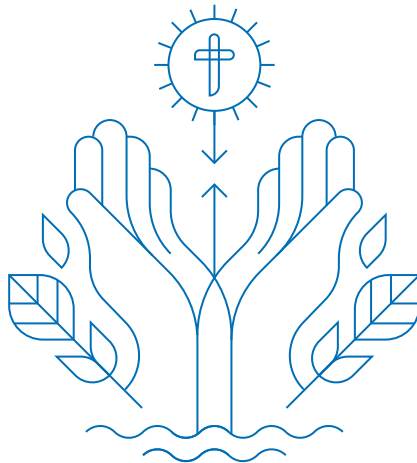
4. What obstacles stand in the way of you participating regularly in the life of the church? How can you protect your schedule so that you aren't "neglecting to meet together"?

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## *Closing Prayer.*

Gracious God and Father, thank you for the community we have found together in this small group. Help us to see ourselves as spiritual friends and as family. May we see in each other an opportunity to love, to serve, to care and to encourage. We want to learn from each other as we each bring our lives and experiences into community. As we journey forward in life together, help us to prioritize this community, that it might reflect the love and grace of Jesus. Help us to become the people you've created and called us to be as you make us better together. Amen.



# Through the **Week.**

## **Morning Prayer**

Almighty God and Father, thank you for this new day. Help me to know today that I am never alone. That you are always with me and that there are fellow Christ-followers who love me and care about me. As I go through this day, will you bring people to my mind, people from my small group, that I may pray for them and encourage them in some way? Give me eyes to see the people around me who need a loving word or a gesture of kindness. Help me to sense the perfect union you have given me with those who also travel this road of faith. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

## **Evening Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunity you gave me today to be a blessing to my friends. Thank you for giving me people to do life with. I am not alone. You are with me. Those whom you have graciously placed in my life are with me. You have commanded us that we "love one another," even as you have loved us. As an act of love, I pray specifically for those you've placed around me. May your love draw us together into a oneness that brings depth to our faith and strength to our soul. Thank you that we are better together. Amen.

# Daily *Journal.*

How have you felt or experienced oneness today with Christ-followers you're doing life with? Have you encouraged or been encouraged by them today? Use this space to record your thoughts or experiences.

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