

# Embody



# Essentials – Build Deep Relationships.

### ICEBREAKER

What's one unique role you had in the family you were raised in? For example, were you the oldest, the youngest, the funniest, the organizer, the peacemaker, or the black sheep?

### INTRODUCTION

One of the best descriptions used for the church is a “family.” Have you found it meaningful to build deep relationships with people in the church?

At Fairhaven, we often say, “Transformation happens best in circles, not rows.” How easy or difficult has it been for you to build deep relationships with people at Fairhaven Church? What kind of advice could you offer someone hoping to find deep relationships within the church?

### INTO GOD'S WORD

The Church is a spiritual community - a family. The Greek word translated “church” in the New Testament is ekklesia. A literal translation of ekklesia would be “a called-out assembly.” The church is not a building but a “called-out assembly” of people passionate about following Jesus Christ.

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 lack meaningful relationships. Ideally, within the church, we find the gift of doing life with people who will love and care for us.

**Read Acts 2:1, 42-47.** How did the early church experience community? How do you see the church of today practicing community? How are they similar or different?

**Read Acts 4:32-37 and Acts 5:12-13.** 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

## WEEK 3 – BUILD DEEP RELATIONSHIPS

each other? How did their commitment to each other become obvious to the people around them, and what was the result?

**Read Hebrews 10:22-25.** Why does the author of Hebrews warn readers about neglecting to meet together? How many benefits of meeting together can you find in the passage?

**Read John 17:20-23.** Jesus prayed that we would all be “one” and unified as believers. Such oneness only occurs through building deep relationships and connecting in community. What’s the best way for us to participate in Jesus’ prayer being fulfilled? What will the watching world see if we focus on “oneness” and building deep relationships with one another?

### A P P L I C A T I O N

Community can be messy because people are not perfect. But the beauty and strength of the Christian community is that no matter what mess you’re in or what issue you’re dealing with, you can have people who want to encourage, support, and pray for you. Christian community is about being transparent with one another, sharing our struggles and pains, and allowing His Spirit to connect us and help us grow stronger together. Galatians 6:2 says, “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (NIV).

Discuss the obstacles that sometimes stand in the way of growing deep relationships in the church. How might you overcome those obstacles?

### D A I L Y T H I S W E E K

Identify one or two people you can reach out to this week and offer help in carrying their burdens. Maybe you can send them an encouraging text, email, or card, offer to pray for them, or help them with something specific in their home or with their children.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

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Identify one or two people you can connect with by grabbing a cup of coffee, inviting them to lunch or dinner, or enjoying a hike or fun activity with them. To build deep relationships, we often need to take the initiative. You never know how taking initiative in a relationship may be the answer to someone's prayer!

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

If you are not currently in a long-term small group at Fairhaven, pray about a group God may want you to join:

- Men's Bible Study Groups
- Women's Bible Study Groups
- Small Groups
- Stage of life groups such as Mom to Mom, etc.

Perhaps God may be asking you to lead a group of your own!

### CLOSING PRAYER

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

### SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Leading Small Groups with Purpose: Everything You Need to Lead a Healthy Group, Steve Gladen  
Baker Books, 2012

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Find Your People: Building Deep Community in a Lonely World, Jennie Allen

Waterbrook, 2022

The Other Half of the Church: Christian Community, Brain Science, and Overcoming Spiritual Stagnation,

Jim Wilder & Michel Hendricks

Moody Publishers, 2020

If you have questions or would like to talk to a Pastor on this subject, please contact your Campus Pastor.