

Icebreaker: If you share food at your home group, how does it add to the community of your group? If not, can you tell of an experience where sharing a meal made you feel closer to someone?

Lectio Divina (read; meditate; pray; contemplate): Read Acts 2:42-47 aloud and have your group share what stands out to each of them in the passage.

Discuss:

1. What group has been the closest you have come to experiencing this kind of fellowship in Acts 2? Military, sports team, music group, friends, family, church, home group, work group, college?
2. What thoughts or experiences come to mind when you think of community? What from this week's passage or this week's discussion of biblical community might add to your view of community?
3. When has the body of Christ or church family helped, nurtured, or sustained you? What was that like?
4. How is ZPC like the Acts 2 church? How is it not?
5. Do you think this kind of Acts 2 community is possible in today's world? Why or why not? If not, what do you think is possible?
6. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says this, "He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter..." Do you agree or disagree?

Practice:

Break into groups of 2-3 and each person share briefly what is happening in your life. Then pray for the person on your right about their specific life story or requests.

Prayer:

Share your prayer requests with one another and also remember those from our church family:

> Prayers of comfort for Brian and Leigh Ann Douglas and family in the death of Brian's father and for Peggy Buchanan in the death of her husband Jim.

Reminders for your group:

> This is the last week for this session of Home Groups! The spring session will begin the week of April 16 and go through the week of June 11.

Leader Notes:

It can be easier to keep to ourselves and not risk getting to know people beyond a surface level. But God calls us to be in community – even when it is not so easy. People who have good, healthy relationships tend to live longer and be more joyful. God created us because God loves us, and expects us to love each other – even in close community – even when that kind of biblical community is challenging. May God bless your Home Group to resemble some of this close community!

[Question 1] You could use this question for your icebreaker. For some, family will be a great example of a nurturing community. For others, it might be a healthy group of friends, choir, sports team or even the camaraderie of the military. Try and get your group members to share the reasons behind their answers.

[Question 2] Community might be the neighborhood or town you live in – or your friendship group. Biblical community as described in Acts 2 is probably more intense, more involved, requiring more of a sacrifice than being an acquaintance or a friend or even just a normal church member.

[Question 3] When I was sick, people visited me. When we had children, people brought us meals. When we needed advice, people gave it and prayed for our decision. We give money when our friends go on mission trips. We share dreams and talk about hard things with each other. We rejoice with those who rejoice, mourn with those who mourn, and we say the things that need to be said to our friends with grace.

[Question 4] ZPC might be similar to the Acts 2 church in listening to the pastor's teaching (not apostle's teaching), praying, sharing meals in homes, breaking bread (communion), meeting at church (the temple), and praising God. However we do not meet every day, we don't often sell possessions and share the proceeds and we don't often see miraculous signs and wonders. At ZPC, are we doing ok with this list or not so much?

[Question 5] This is a good question to draw out opinion. We don't really share possessions, but we can be good neighbors and watch each other's children, carpool, share meals, share lawnmowers, and care for each other in time of need or sickness. What does an Acts 2 church look like today? Is it more like a Christian commune, or more like a healthy contemporary church?

[Question 6] Sometimes we idealize community, but when we see the reality of community we flee from it. The dream of a great community looks great. The reality is that all people have flaws, but to be in community means being committed to sharing life with them and supporting each other even in the boring times and difficult times. May your home group be a place of healthy community!