

# LIVING IN COMM Unity



**CHRIST PLACE.CHURCH**  
FALL 2021 CONNECT GROUP STUDY





## INTRODUCTION

*It's all about relationships! A lot of time we want God to answer our prayers, but right now we have an opportunity to be the answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17. Jesus prayed for his people to be one as He and the Father are one, and that our unity would draw people to Himself. Unity can only be attained in relational community. This Connect Group series will address the "how" behind biblical unity in community.*

*Great friendships are possible, conflict resolution is achievable and peace and rest are attainable in community. Let's find out what should unite us and how to filter through the rest of the distractions. My prayer is that we don't just discover information but that we're truly transformed into friends who follow Jesus together. Jesus' desire for unity in community is waiting on the other side!*

Pastor Paul Welch  
*Discipleship Pastor*



# USING YOUR WORKBOOK



## GROUP OPENER

Before you dive into the study each week, take a few minutes to answer the questions that will get your group talking and help you get to know one another.



## VIDEO LESSON

Each week, a video lesson is provided by Christ Place Discipleship Pastor, Paul Welch. Writing things down helps you engage with content. Included in your workbook are places for fill-in-the-blanks and open areas for you to take notes along with the video lesson each week. You will want to reference your notes during your group discussion.



## BIBLE READING

We have provided the Scripture reference we will be studying in New Living Translation within your study guide.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Your Connect Group will walk through these questions together in discussion. You may not get to every question, or your group leader may skip some to keep the discussion moving.



## PRAYER REQUESTS & GROUP PRAYER

Take time as a group each week to share prayer requests and pray together.



## NEXT STEPS

At the end of each lesson is a way for you to apply what you've learned and take it further in your own life, in community and on your own. Take some time to do these next steps during the week between your Connect Group meetings.





WEEK ONE

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## It's All About Relationships



### GROUP OPENER

- What is God saying to you about this weekend's message?
- How might our relationships change for the better if we apply what God is showing us this week?
- What's the most challenging/best thing about being a new person in any setting (or in a setting like this)?



### VIDEO LESSON: It's All About Relationships



### BIBLE READING: Acts 2:42-47

**42** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. **43** A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. **44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. **45** They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. **46** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— **47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

#### Two Definitions:

1. Community - \_\_\_\_\_

2. Unity - \_\_\_\_\_

**Four Attributes of Biblical Unity in Community:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus Together

- a. Jesus has the highest authority in my life.

- b. Disciple-making is a way of life.

- c. Invite others to “come and see” a compelling biblical community.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Through the Bible Together

- a. Independent Bible learning is a good start, but fuller learning happens in community.

- b. The Bible shows us how to live and what to unite under.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Connect With Each Other

- a. Share meals together.

Ask questions, listen and share stories.

- b. Be aware of each other's needs.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Together

- a. We align our heart with God's heart.

- b. Believe in God for the supernatural.

- c. Genuinely enjoy being a part of what God is doing.

## ?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stood out to you from the video?
- How much does our personality play into our comfort level of interacting within a community?
- We all bring our backgrounds and preconceived ideas to any group setting. What would you say you bring to this group setting?
- Let's think of a relational example. Have you ever worked hard to connect with people and felt tired afterward, but it was completely worth it?

- Reread Acts 2:42-47. Based on this passage, what's the difference between culture's definition of unity and biblical unity?

## GROUP REFLECTION

These six weeks together can be the catalyst to change how we live and create a disciple-making way of life.



## PRAYER REQUESTS & GROUP PRAYER

Share prayer requests and pray for one another.

## NEXT STEPS

**Community:** Throughout the New Testament there are verses with the phrase “one another” in them. They are great reminders of how we can be the answer together. Read and discuss the following “one another” verses with your family or a friend this week: *James 5:13-20, Colossians 3:12-25, Hebrews 10:23-25, 1 Peter 4:7-9*

**Self:** Read *1 Corinthians 12*. What do you notice about unity in diversity?





**WEEK TWO**

## **Friends Who Follow Jesus Together**



### **GROUP OPENER**

- If you could only eat one snack for a year, would you choose sweet or savory?
- What did God impress on you about this weekend's message?
- How might our relationships change for the better if we applied what God showed us this week?
- What apprehensions, past experiences, and expectations do you tend to bring into new relationships?



### **VIDEO LESSON: Friends Who Follow Jesus Together**



### **BIBLE READING: Read John 13:34-35**

**34** So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. **35** Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

### **Three Friendship Questions**

1. Do I have to be friends with \_\_\_\_\_?

2. What does it look like to \_\_\_\_\_ friendships?
  
  
  
3. What can I do to create \_\_\_\_\_ for friendship?

#### 4 Traits of Biblical Friendships

1. Friends Get To \_\_\_\_\_ One Another  
John 3:22 NLT "*Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people.*"
  
  
  
2. Friends \_\_\_\_\_ for One Another  
James 5:16a NLT "*Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*"
  
  
  
3. Friends \_\_\_\_\_ One Another  
Hebrews 10:24 NLT "*Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.*"
  
  
  
4. Friends \_\_\_\_\_ One Another  
John 13:14-15 NLT "*And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.*"

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Describe how you met someone that ended up becoming a great friend.
- Do you think the risks of building relationships are worth the rewards?
- How can a great friendship impact how people view Jesus?
- It's been said that in order to have a friend, you need to be a friend. Do you agree with this statement? Why, or why not?
- Pick a partner you're not sitting next to. Take five minutes (set a timer) and look in the New Testament book of John for a story of Jesus modeling friendship. After 5 minutes, each pair shares with the group.

### GROUP REFLECTION

Imagine how attractive Jesus would be to others if we lived this way in our friendships.



### PRAYER REQUESTS & GROUP PRAYER

Share prayer requests and pray for one another.



## NEXT STEPS

**Serve One Another:** Friends serve one another. In order to serve each other you'll need to be vulnerable and share a possible need. How could someone in your group meet a need you have?

**Community:** Throughout the New Testament there are verses with the phrase “one another” in them. They are great reminders of how we can be the answer together. Read and discuss the following “one another” verses with your family or a friend this week: 1

*Thessalonians 5:8-22, John 13:1-17, Romans 16:1-16, Hebrews 10:19-24*

**Self:** In our video, Pastor Paul used the phrase: “Friends with many, close with a few, issues with none.” Create a list of friends. From that list, who do you consider as your “close with a few”? Now, let them know what you value about them as friends.



**WEEK THREE**

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## Ideologies in Community



### GROUP OPENER

- Name your favorite Saturday morning cartoon from your childhood or currently.
- What was God saying to you about this weekend's message?
- How might our relationships change for the better if we applied what God showed us this week?



### VIDEO LESSON: Ideologies in Community



### BIBLE READING: Read Philippians 2:1-5

*1 Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? 2 Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. 3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. 4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. 5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

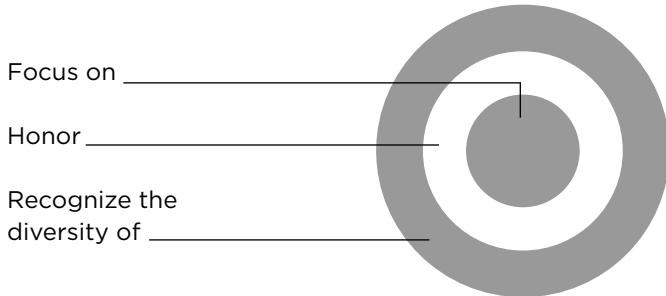
### Two Biblical Priorities When Processing Our Ideologies

1. Focus on \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Jesus values \_\_\_\_\_ as a character trait.

## Two Practical Tools to Help Us \_\_\_\_\_ Our Ideologies

1. The Truth Circles



2. Two-box \_\_\_\_\_

- a. The further out we get in these circles, the more “boxes” we need to create.
- b. Develop an ability to put yourself in the other person’s shoes.
- c. Quote: “The older I get, the bigger my grace box gets.” - Eric Matty

## ?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are some ‘**Rules of Engagement**’ we can follow during our discussion that will help us in the context of this specific material. Which of these ‘rules’ do you think will help our discussion and how?

1. Talk about principles, not specific topics or issues.
2. Focus on sharing rather than persuading.
3. “Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry.”  
James 1:19
4. Be respectful. Avoid diminishing or shutting down another person’s experience or opinion.

5. If you break any of these rules, be quick to apologize and move forward.
- How can you have relational depth with someone who doesn't fit into your box?
  - Someone briefly share an example of how you've built a relationship with someone who doesn't fit neatly into your box.
  - Have you allowed an issue or an opposing ideology to divide you and another person? Was it worth the break in your relationship?
  - (Set a timer for one minute) Thinking about everything discussed today, take one minute and write one thing that comes naturally to you and one thing that is challenging for you. (Start timer)
  - (Stop timer after one minute) Share what you wrote.

### **GROUP REFLECTION**

Imagine if our hard conversations happen in a healthy way. What a win that would be for our relationships!



### **PRAYER REQUESTS & GROUP PRAYER**

Share prayer requests and pray for one another.



## NEXT STEPS

**Serve One Another:** How can you serve someone in your group? Listen carefully and ask good questions. Begin to look for ways to practically help someone with a need during this series.

**Community:** Throughout the New Testament there are verses with the phrase “one another” in them. They are great reminders of how we can be the answer together. Read and discuss the following “one another” verses with your family or a friend this week: *Romans 14:1-23, Ephesians 3:14-4:6, Ephesians 5:21-33, James 4:1-12, Galatians 5:7-26*

**Self:** Read Acts 15:36-41 about the issue Paul had with Mark. It seems like Paul didn’t trust Mark. So much so that they split ways in a serious disagreement. Now read 2 Timothy 4:11. What may have happened between the time they split and when Paul calls for Mark to be with him? What does this story teach us about how to handle opposing ideologies or disagreements among Christ-Followers?

**GROUP OPENER**

- What is your favorite part of this group so far?
- What was your main take-away from this weekend's message?
- How might our relationships change for the better if we applied what God showed us this week?

**VIDEO LESSON: Biblical Standards in Community****BIBLE READING:** Acts 2:42-47

**42** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. **43** A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

**44** And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. **45** They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. **46** They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— **47** all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

## Five Rules on the Boat

1. Don't throw anyone \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Show up for \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Everyone is \_\_\_\_\_ for their personal quarters.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ the deck.
5. Be sure to have barrels of \_\_\_\_\_ on board.

## ?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you be real with others without oversharing?
- What does oversharing mean?
- How does oversharing affect a group?
- What does it look like when you take responsibility for your attitudes and behaviors and let others in the group take responsibility for theirs?
- How does the level of emotional safety in your Connect Group affect your contribution?
- What would happen if our homes, our Connect Group, and our church were intentional environments of grace?

- Which one of those three environments can you begin to have an impact on today (home, our Connect Group, or church)?

## GROUP REFLECTION

We have an opportunity right now to create environments of grace and develop relationships of grace that reflect biblical standards in community.



## PRAYER REQUESTS & GROUP PRAYER

Share prayer requests and pray for one another.



## NEXT STEPS

**Serve One Another:** When we serve others, it usually means we'll have to plan how we'll serve that person. Do you have a plan of how you will serve someone in your group (who, what, where, and when)?

**Community:** Throughout the New Testament there are verses with the phrase "one another" in them. They are great reminders of how we can be the answer together. Read and discuss the following "one another" verses with your family or a friend this week: *Romans 13:6-10, Ephesians 5:15-20, Colossians 3:1-17, Hebrews 3:1-13*

**Self:** Read *2 Timothy 3:14-17*. What is the Bible intended to be used for? Why is it important to have a biblical standard in our personal lives and community with one another?



### GROUP OPENER

- Name an insect or rodent that could cause you to involuntarily jump or scream!
- What did you find yourself thinking about most after this last weekend's message?
- How might our relationships change for the better if we applied what God showed us this week?
- What are some attributes of peace?



### VIDEO LESSON: Fight for Peace



### BIBLE READING: Romans 12:8

*If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.*

### Three Ways to Keep the Peace

1. \_\_\_\_\_ thoughtfully.

a. A message to talkers:

b. A reminder for listeners:

2. \_\_\_\_\_ resolution.

a. Choose to think the best.

b. Be patient.

c. Promote environments of grace.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ peace-provoking \_\_\_\_\_.

a. Are we more concerned about who we are or what we do?

b. Are we more content with what God has given us, or with what we can attain on our own?

c. Are we more interested in what God says or what people think?

d. Are we more motivated by love or fear?

## ?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Pick one of the questions from the opposite page to discuss as a group.
- What might keep a community from experiencing peace?
- Has anyone here been a part of a community of peace? If so, discuss what it was like?
- How important is personal responsibility to maintain peace in a community?
- Who or what might be an enemy to peace in a community? What are some ways our group could guard against threats to peace?

### GROUP REFLECTION

Peace is possible and worth the fight



### PRAYER REQUESTS & GROUP PRAYER

Share prayer requests and pray for one another.



## NEXT STEPS

**Serve One Another:** Some needs can only be met with others. Have you discovered a need in your group that is beyond something you can do alone? It may be time to include others. Also, remember serving someone needs to be done with dignity. Do you need to ask permission before you share?

**Community:** Throughout the New Testament there are verses with the phrase “one another” in them. They are great reminders of how we can be the answer together. Read and discuss the following “one another” verses with your family or a friend this week: *John 13:33-35, Romans 12:1-10, Romans 15:1-7, James 4:1-12, 1 Corinthians 1:10-17*

**Self:** In Matthew 5:9, Jesus says, “God blesses those who work for peace...” Now read 1 Samuel 25. Who would identify as a peacemaker in this story? What were the threats against peace in this story? How might this story look in our culture today?



## GROUP OPENER

- Which actual or made-up reality TV show would you like to be on as a competitor or guest observer?
- What's one thing you want to do differently after hearing this weekend's message?
- How might our relationships change for the better if we applied what God showed us this week?
- When you have the opportunity, what do you like to do to relax?



## VIDEO LESSON: The Gift of Rest



## BIBLE READING: Matthew 11:28-30

**28** Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

### How to Rest Easy

Prioritize the discipline of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ it go.

- a. To rest means to trust.
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Learn to trust God and others with me.
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. Establish a \_\_\_\_\_ of rest.
  - a. Daily rhythm.
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Weekly rhythm.
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. Monthly rhythm.
  
  
  
  
  
  - d. Annual rhythm.

## ?? DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What keeps us from being comfortable in an attitude of rest with other people?
- How might our relationships change for the better if we developed consistent rest habits?
- To rest involves trust, which is an ongoing process. How do you practice letting go and trusting God?

- Why can trusting God and others be such a challenge?
- Identify which rhythm of rest is a more realistic starting point for you. Now, talk about why.

## **GROUP REFLECTION**

When followers of Jesus are well-rested,  
we are a gift to those around us.



## **PRAYER REQUESTS & GROUP PRAYER**

Share prayer requests and pray for one another.



## NEXT STEPS

**Serve One Another:** Living a way of life that serves others is contagious. Just like when you get a new car, you begin to notice how many other cars there are like yours. As we experience the joy that comes with serving others, it changes how we see and listen to them. Are you slowing down enough to give yourself the time and attention to serve someone?

**Community:** Throughout the New Testament there are verses with the phrase “one another” in them. They are great reminders of how we can be the answer together. Read and discuss the following “one another” verses with your family or a friend this week: *1 Peter 5:1-7, 1 Peter 1:13-25, Ephesians 4:29-5:2, Romans 12:9-16*

**Self:** Read *Psalm 23*. Spend some time journaling about what this chapter says about rest. Spend some time creating a plan to establish the four rhythms of rest in your life.

# **GOING FURTHER**

Book & Podcast Recommendations

## **BOOKS**

***The Good and Beautiful Community*** by James Bryan Smith

***Bo's Cafe*** by Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, John S. Lynch

***The Ascent of a Leader*** by Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, John S. Lynch

***Tactics - A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*** by Gregory Koukl

***Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*** by Peter Scazzero

## **PODCAST**

***Finding God's Rhythm's for Your Life: Part 1***

Emotionally Healthy (EH) Leader Podcast





