**Learn in Community**



Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Why is my church family important?**

“For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” ([Matthew 18:20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt18.20))

*When we think of church, it’s easy for our mind to be instantly drawn to the building where we attend. However, in God’s design, the church isn’t the building that we gather in. Instead, the church has everything to do with the people who are gathered there. In essence, the biblical church is not a building that we go to, but a family of believers we belong to.*

*As our Father, God’s heart is to adopt us into His family (*[*Ephesians 1:5*](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph1.5)*). When we choose to put our faith in Jesus, we instantly join God’s family. We not only belong to Him, but we belong to each other. Just like our natural families here on earth were meant to function, God uses our church family to meet our needs. A healthy church family offers love, encouragement, guidance, and accountability. As the family of God—the Church—we grow together, celebrate together, share together, and even serve together. As we make a commitment to God’s family, we will become stronger, more devoted followers of Jesus.*

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| First time leading *Learn* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

To access session content and videos from a computer, visit: [BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**  What is the most unique or unusual cross-cultural experience you’ve ever had? |

When we first experience a new culture, it can be so different from what we’re used to. It can be fun and exciting, but also be unusual and confusing. This is how many people feel when they accept Jesus. When we believe Jesus is Lord and Savior and invite Him into our heart, everything changes. We may feel like we’re citizens of a new country! One of the most interesting pieces to this new Christian life is learning to live in community with other believers.

Many of us focus on fending for ourself, so being a part of the church can feel foreign—like waking up in a new country. But Jesus freely gives His love to us and wants us to share that same love with others. He wants us to love and trust each other. He wants us to grow together and have an impact on the people around us.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: What is your favorite thing about our church community?



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| **QUESTION**  What is your favorite thing about our church community? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

We read in [Matthew 22:34–40](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt22.34-40) about a law expert who asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was. Surprisingly, Jesus gave him not only one answer, but He added a second. He instructed us to love God with everything we have, but that alone should not be the end of our love. If we really want to love and serve God, we must also love our neighbors as ourself. For any of us with neighbors, coworkers, or anyone else in our life, we know loving them isn’t always easy. But the more we read and understand the Bible, the more we see how amazing Jesus is. He didn’t just come to make things right between us and God. Jesus also came to make things right between people.

One glimpse at the daily news tells us that people have a hard time getting along. Selfishness and brokenness often get in the way. Jesus wants to change our heart and made a way for love and peace to exist between us. Jesus said it is very unusual and would be the very thing that lets people know we follow Him ([John 13:34–35](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn13.34-35).) The way we live in community together as a body of believers can have big impact on our own life and on the rest of the world.

**Believers Commit to Grow Together**

Read [Acts 2:42–43](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac2.42-43).

One of the earmarks of the Early Church is that they were highly committed to the Lord and to each other. They focused on living in community, learning and growing together. In the same way, we can join together in our Christian community to purposefully learn and grow in our faith. As we spend time with each other and with the Lord, our life will have greater impact on those around us.

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| **QUESTION**  What were some of the things the early Christians did together each week? |

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| **QUESTION**  In what ways is our church community like that? In what ways is it different? |

**Believers Take Care of Each Other**

Read [Acts 2:44–47](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac2.44-47).

The early believers really looked out for each other. And let’s note that this passage is not just talking about church leaders, but everyone in the church. They listened to sound teaching, then went out and made a difference in other people’s lives. They gave generously, opened their homes, and spent time together. As they openly shared their faith, the Church began to grow and spread, just as Jesus had said it would ([Acts 1:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac1.8)).

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| **QUESTION**  Why do you think so many people were joining the Church every day ([Acts 2:47](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac2.47)) |

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| **QUESTION**  Describe a time when Christians helped you or met a need in your life. |

**Believers Pursue God Passionately**

As a part of a Christian community, we have a responsibility to help each another. We also have a responsibility to do our part by growing and maturing. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul gave some guidance about what growth and maturity should look like for each one of us.

Read [Ephesians 5:15–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph5.15-20).

Following God changes us. Jesus gives us a new heart. And as we walk with Him, we grow in wisdom and maturity. The Holy Spirit empowers us to share life and hope. We’re no longer content to live foolishly or without thinking. We no longer want to live selfishly, but want our life to make a difference.

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| **QUESTION**  What are some ways God is helping you be wiser in life? |

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| **QUESTION**  How does worshipping God together with other believers impact your life? |

**Reflect**

**We Grow Together**

The Early Church is the model for our own Christian communities today. The world will know we are Christians by our love for each other. Just like the Early Church, our Christian community can affect the people all around us. In the Book of Acts, people could not help but notice when Christians took care of each other, shared meals together, and worshipped together. Both then and now, the joy and health that Jesus brings to our fellowship is like a magnet to attract other people.

As [Matthew 18:19–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt18.19-20) points out, something is special when we gather with other believers in agreement. We’re stronger when we work and grow together ([Ecclesiastes 4:12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ec4.12)). Being a part of a healthy Christian community is an important part of every believer’s life. The Church is the channel God uses to build and equip followers of Christ to share the good news with everyone.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**  What’s an area of life in which God is challenging you to grow? |

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| **QUESTION**  How can we help each other more within our own group? |

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| **QUESTION**  What are some ways our group could have a healthy impact on our community? |

**Activate**

We are challenged when we read that the early believers shared their possessions so freely. Being really generous is often a stretch for most people. Learning to hold our possessions loosely and to share with others is a powerful and important lesson. Jesus shared so freely with us. He wants His Church to also share freely with one another ([Galatians 6:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga6.10)).

**Challenge**

This week, watch for an opportunity to give generously to someone in your church community. It could be anything—mowing someone’s yard, anonymously paying a bill, or giving someone a nice piece of clothing you own. It isn’t about sharing your castoffs, but meaningfully giving of your time and possessions. As we share with others, our hearts are knit together. We can all grow to be more like Christ.

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**Did You Know?**

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| The idea of communal living was a reality already ingrained in a large part of the Jewish world in the days of Jesus. In Galilee, archaeology has shown, in places such as Capernaum and Chorazin, that families lived communally in large villa–style houses known as *insula* homes. These facilities connected multiple homes together to serve as large singular units; families living there shared their food and finances. In certain communities such as the Qumran community of the Dead Sea region, we find that individuality was sacrificed similarly to what is seen of the church in the Book of Acts. There the entire small village lived as a singular unit, sharing all they had, dining in a single room together, and shunning personal wealth—all for the purpose of furthering the kingdom of God. |

**What We Believe**

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| **Official Doctrine**  The Church as described in the Bible consists of all people who have received forgiveness through Jesus Christ and placed their faith in Him as the only sacrifice for their sins. The Church is the body of Christ and includes all Christians, with no boundaries as to age, race, gender, or denomination. Every believer collectively makes up the Church and is the dwelling place of God through the Holy Spirit. |
| **The Significance of This Doctrine**  Because God’s purpose concerning humankind is to seek and to save people who are lost in sin ([Luke 19:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk19.10)), our church is designed to be an agency of God for evangelizing the world ([Acts 1:8](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac1.8); [Matthew 28:19–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.19-20); [Mark 16:15–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk16.15-16)). And because He desires to be worshipped by all ([Revelation 19:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re19.10); [22:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re22.9)), our church serves as a corporate body in which people may worship God ([1 Corinthians 12:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.13)). And because He wants to build a unified body of believers mature in faith and knowledge like Jesus ([Ephesians 4:12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph4.12)), our church operates as a channel of God’s purpose to equip and build people who are continually growing in the Lord and being perfected in His image ([1 Corinthians 12:28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.28); [14:12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co14.12); [Ephesians 4:11–16](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph4.11-16)). And because He longs for believers to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world ([Galatians 6:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga6.10)), our church is committed to loving people and bringing help to those in need ([Psalm 112:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps112.9); [Galatians 2:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga2.10); [6:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga6.10); [James 1:27](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jas1.27)). |

**Learn on Your Own**

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| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: We Grow Together**

Read [Acts 2:42–47](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac2.42-47).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**  What is God saying to you about the growth that can happen as you live in community together with other believers? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: We Work Together**

Read [1 Corinthians 12:12–27](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co12.12-27).

The Church is one of the interesting and beautiful ways God chose to show the world who He is. We know He created each of us. We’re all so different, yet we are each made in His image no matter what we look like or where we came from ([Genesis 1:26–27](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ge1.26-27)). Every part of the body of Christ is created to work together to reflect more of God’s character to a watching world. This means all of us are important and we make the greatest impact when we work together. Our life and story can play an important role in leading others to Jesus.

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| **QUESTION**  Who might your life and story be most meaningful to? |

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| **QUESTION**  What is God saying to you about where you could serve in the body of Christ? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: We Learn Together**

Read [Galatians 6:1–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga6.1-10).

How many times in life have we as believers gone through some difficulty that we brought on ourself, maybe a bad dating relationship or a poor financial decision? Then we wondered, *“Why didn’t someone tell me?”* The answer to this question is often that we didn’t ask for anyone’s advice or input.

One of the great strengths of the Church is mutual accountability. Christians should care about each other and want one another to grow in Christ. Of course, this has to be done gently and in love, not with any sort of desire to control. As we walk with God together, we learn and grow together. We can help each other live a godly life.

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| **QUESTION**  What situation did you face where you could have really benefitted from having someone help you make wise decisions? |

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| **QUESTION**  How could accountability help you right now? |

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| **QUESTION**  How could you help someone else in your group? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: We Witness Together**

Read [Matthew 28:16–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt28.16-20).

Jesus spent the three years of His public ministry instructing His followers about the kingdom of God and how they should live. Before ascending to heaven, He gave one of the most important instructions of all, which is often called the Great Commission.

These are our “marching orders” for what to do with our faith. It’s a big job, but thankfully none of us has to do it alone. Since the beginning of the Church on the Day of Pentecost, believers have been faithfully following Jesus’ orders. This is why each one of us knows about Jesus today! One of our primary tasks as the Church is to witness and make disciples together. This isn’t just expected of pastors and missionaries, but required of all of us. As we do this, the Church grows in number and our own faith grows too.

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| **QUESTION**  How is this final instruction from Jesus surprising to you? |

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| **QUESTION**  What are a few things you can do to follow the Great Commission in your own life? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: We Worship Together**

Read [Revelation 19:1–10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re19.1-10).

This passage is an incredible glimpse of heaven. God lovingly created each person who has ever lived; He also wants to spend eternity with each one. Our world can be so divided, but heaven will be filled with people from every tribe and nation ([Revelation 7:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Re7.9)). The Church can show the world what real unity looks like. In heaven, none of the division exists that currently plagues humanity in this world. Our churches can have the same unity here on earth because of the love and hope of Jesus. We all grow together as we worship together.

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| **QUESTION**  In what ways does your church look like this gathering in heaven? In what ways is it different? |

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| **QUESTION**  How is God challenging you in the area of worshipping together with other believers? |