

Biblical Community/Small Groups

The 30 Essentials is designed for a small group study. The essential studied should coincide with the sermon. You may divide the study in four weekly studies, bi-weekly or monthly. This study includes a video which should be used to complete the video segment section.

Each session should start with a review of the Pastor's sermon. Discuss the main points, the take away, and scripture references. Then continue with the study below.

MASTER KEYS

Key Question: How do I develop healthy relationships with others

Key Idea: I fellowship with Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, in the lives of others and in the world.

Key Verse: All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. **Acts 2:44-47**

VIDEO SEGMENT QUESTIONS

As you watch the video segment for this session, use the following outline to answer some of the main points.

1. Key Question: What do I do to develop healthy _____ with others?
2. Key Idea: I fellowship with Christians to _____ God's purposes in my life, in the lives of others, and in the world.
3. Key Verse: "All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to _____ to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to _____ together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and _____ together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. **Acts 2:44-47**
4. In Genesis 2:18, God said "It is not good for the man to be _____."

5. God is a _____ - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
6. We too were created _____ community and _____ a community.
7. Key Application: Fellowship with other believers to keep your relationship with _____ strong.
8. Key Application: Fellowship with other believers to keep your relationship with _____ strong.
9. Key Application: Fellowship with other believers to _____ God's will on earth.

EVALUATE

As a group, discuss your thoughts and feelings about the following declarations. Which statements are easy to declare with certainty? Which are more challenging and why? Use a scale of 1-6 to rate how strongly you believe the statements below. (1 = no belief at all, 6 = complete confidence)

_____ I have close relationships with other Christians who have influence on my life's direction.

_____ I participate in a group of Christians who really know me and support me.

_____ I allow other Christians to hold me accountable for my actions.

_____ I daily pray for and support other Christians.

GROUP DISCUSSION

1. In what ways is it "not good for a person to be alone"?

2. In a world where people are becoming more isolated and self centered, what can be done to nurture a vibrant others-focused community?

3. What is or could be an adversary of biblical community? In other words, what in our lives or culture impedes the success of healthy, attractive, faith-based community?

4. What simple steps could this group take to enhance and or develop more connection with God, each other, and non-believers?

BIBLE ENGAGEMENT

1. The passage from Ecclesiastes 4 describes a relationship between two people. Why, then, does the teacher say “a cord of three strands” is not quickly broken?

2. As you read the passage from Ephesians 2, look for the differences between the two dwelling places for God: the temple and the New Testament church. What barriers are there in the two places? Who is allowed into each place? What is the cornerstone of each place?

3. Imagine what it would have been like to be a member of the early church after Pentecost. Would you have wanted to be a part of that community? Why or why not? In what ways should the early church be a model for churches today?

4. As you read the passages from Hebrews 13, Acts 18, I Corinthians 16, Romans 16, and I John 1-3, ponder the emphasis and importance placed on hospitality. Why do you think it was so important to the early church? Is it still important today? Why or why not?

TAKE ACTION

Memorizing scripture is a valuable discipline for all believers to exercise. Spend a few minutes each day committing the Key verse to memory.

Recite the key idea out loud. As you do, ask yourself, “Does my life reflect this statement? Key Idea: I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need. Answer the following questions to help apply this week’s key idea to your own life.

1. How would this practice express itself in your life?

2. What visible attributes can be found in someone who practices biblical community?

3. What is impeding your ability to experience biblical community? How can you overcome this obstacle?

4. What action step can you take this week to develop biblical community?

CASE STUDY

Use the following case study as a model for a real-life situation where you might put this week's key idea into practice.

Lauren began to follow Christ after a close friend invited her to her church's summer camp. Not growing up in a religious family made her feel far behind in her faith. So, she immediately began to read every Bible study she could find. Lauren's faith soared as she learned more about herself and the character of God. Ten years have passed and she still reads her Bible daily and attends the worship service at her church, but she feels as if something is missing; that she has hit a spiritual plateau and doesn't know what to do to change it

Using the Key applications from this session, what practical advice would you give Cassandra? (If needed, refer to your video notes for a reminder of this session's Key Applications.)

WHAT WE BELIEVE

In Fellowship you share your true feelings. There are three fears that cause us to be inauthentic: the fear of exposure, the **fear of rejection** and the fear of being hurt again. In the light of God's truth we don't try to hide our faults. So as James 5:15 says, "*Admit your faults one to another and pray for each other so that you may be healed...*" In recovery we have a saying that you're only as sick as your secrets. I often say revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. That's what **authenticity is all about**. You say, "This is where I'm at," and you admit it.

The quickest way to build authenticity in your life and in your group is this—study and apply the word of God. "*The word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our inner most thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are.*" It's not pop psychology that makes you authentic. It's not therapy that makes you authentic. It's not ooey-goey sentimentality that makes you authentic. It's coming into contact with the

word of God. When I look at the word of God and let it touch my soul and I see where I don't measure up and where I need to grow then it forces me to be authentic.

DEVOTIONAL

Fellowship is built on mutuality. In fellowship that means we help each other grow. Together we're stronger. You cannot be what God wants you to be without other people. Romans 1:12 says, *"I want us to help each other with the faith we have. Your faith will help me and my faith will help you."* That's like that great theologian Bill Withers once said, "We all need somebody to lean on." We need each other to do that.

There are three parts to mutuality when it comes to building blocks of biblical community.

1. **Mutual accountability.** In other words, you get a prayer partner in your group. You have somebody who you're personally encouraging in their quiet time in your faith and in your spiritual growth. Someone you get alone with and you commit to checking up on each other.
2. **Mutual encouragement.** *"(Speak) only what is helpful for building others up, according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."* The Bible says, *"Encourage anyone who feels left out. Help all who are weak, and be patient with everyone."*
3. **Mutual honoring.** Romans 12:10 *"Take delight in honoring each other."*

PRAYER JOURNAL: You have been pointed to the truths of what it means to think, be and act like Jesus as it relates to Biblical Community, but it's prayer that will empower you to become all that you were created to be. Whatever you would say or think in a conversation with the Lord at this time write it here.
