

Life in the Spirit: Community — Acts 2:42–47

HOUSE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE — IN (LOOKING BACK) • UP (LOOKING UP) • OUT (LOOKING FORWARD)

Before You Meet: The early church was not an event people attended — it was a family that shared a common life through the gospel, loved each other, and lived out the mission together.

UP (Gospel) is one third of the night. Give real time to IN and OUT too.

IN — Looking Back *(Community)*

Care • Worship • Celebrate Faithfulness • Motivation & Encouragement

Care. Check in — highs, lows, and needs for prayer or practical help.

Worship. Praise together: a song, silence, or naming one thing you're thankful for.

Celebrate Faithfulness. Follow up on last week's step and celebrate it out loud.

Motivation & Encouragement. Encourage someone by name for growth you've seen.

UP — Looking Up *(Gospel — Sermon Discussion Guide)*

Reword or skip questions as needed. Pray first and aim for genuine conversation.

Key Takeaways

1. **Shared common life.** Community is life together through the gospel, loving like family, living out the mission.
2. **Gospel from A to Z.** The gospel is not just the entry point — it is the ongoing center of community and growth.
3. **A family, not a service.** The church is a family to belong to, not an organization to subscribe to.
4. **Large and small.** Healthy churches gather in the temple courts and in homes.
5. **Love is the witness.** Mission is ineffective without community; our love for one another is itself a witness.

Opening (Choose One)

- When you were growing up, what did family gatherings look like? What made them feel meaningful — or not?
- Who has made you feel like family at church, and what did they do?

Read Acts 2:42–47. Also consider John 17:20–21 and John 13:34–35 as supporting passages.

Digging In

1. The sermon describes Christian community as “the shared common life through the gospel, loving each other like family and living out the mission.” In what ways does your current experience of church life reflect or fall short of this?
2. What is the difference between a “restrained heart” and a “changed heart”? Rule-keeping cannot repair what sin has broken. How does the gospel as the foundation of community change the way you relate to other believers?
3. The early church gathered in large groups at the temple and in smaller gatherings in homes. Why are both necessary, and which do you find more challenging to prioritize?
4. Jesus' prayer in John 17 presents believers as gifts from the Father to the Son and to one another. How does seeing fellow members as gifts, rather than people who meet or fail your expectations, change how you engage them?
5. Francis Schaeffer called the observable love of true Christians for true Christians the final apologetic to a lost world. When have you witnessed Christian community that made the gospel genuinely attractive to someone outside the faith?

Going Deeper

6. Fear and shame, lies we believe about God and ourselves, and hurt from others are three primary barriers to community. Which resonates most with you, and how has it affected your engagement with the church?
7. Mission is ineffective without community: Jesus sent out the 72 in pairs and Paul never traveled alone. What does this say about our individualistic approach to evangelism and service?
8. Paul Tripp's "gospel amnesia" is forgetting who we are in Christ. How does gathering with believers around Scripture and prayer serve as a practical remedy?
9. The sermon challenges the consumer mentality that treats church as a service to attend. What habits or assumptions in your life reflect that, and what would a family-oriented approach look like?

Closing Reflection

10. Are we giving ourselves away for the sake of God's people and for those who don't yet know him? What is one concrete step you could take this week to shift from asking what you can receive to what you can give?

OUT — Looking Forward *(Mission)*

Preparing for the Mission · Going on Mission · Praying for the Mission

Preparing for the Mission

- **Name your barrier.** Identify whether fear and shame, lies, or hurt is most present for you. Bring one observation to share.
- **Ask the question.** Before Sunday, ask God: "Who do you want me to talk to today, and how can I encourage them?"

Going on Mission

- **Share a meal.** Invite someone from church (or your oikos) to your home. The goal is not to entertain but to share life and hear each other's stories.
- **Encourage one person.** Send a church family member an encouraging message or a piece of Scripture this week.

Praying for the Mission

Pair up and share the barrier you named. Pray for the Spirit to reveal what keeps you from deeper community, for forgiveness toward anyone who has hurt you in church, and for one person in your oikos by name to experience God's love through your community.

Closing

Memory verse — Acts 2:42: devoted, not casually interested, to the teaching of the Word, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. Pray that God would make your group a place where people are loved the way Christ has loved you.