

Small Group Guide

Combating Loneliness Through Community

Based on Hebrews 10:24-25

Overview

This week's message addressed one of the most quietly devastating struggles of our time: loneliness. Using Hebrews 10:24-25 as a foundation, we explored how God designed humanity for connection, how sin disrupted that design, and how the gospel of Jesus Christ gives us the confidence to draw near to him and to one another. This guide is designed to help your group move beyond surface-level conversation and into the kind of community the message described.

Key Takeaways

- God designed humanity for connection, purpose, belonging, and meaningful relationships from the very beginning. Loneliness is not part of his original design.
 - Sin is the gap between God's perfect design for community and what we actually experience. Good community alone cannot close that gap.
 - The gospel gives us confidence to draw near to Jesus rather than hide in shame. That confidence is the foundation for genuine community.
 - Jesus modeled four concentric circles of community: the crowd (500), the servants (72), the disciples (12), and the inner circle (3). These are not a checklist or a funnel, but overlapping contexts that draw us closer to Jesus at the center.
 - The goal of community is not simply to meet together, but to draw one another nearer to Jesus.
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Getting Started

Before diving into the discussion questions, take a few minutes as a group to reflect on this question from the message:

In the last seven days, how often would you say that you felt lonely?

Invite anyone who is willing to share honestly. Remind the group that this is a safe space and that the goal is not to fix one another but to listen well.

Discussion Questions

Exploring the Problem

1. The message referenced research showing that one in five practicing Christians experience chronic loneliness on a daily basis. Did that statistic surprise you? Why or why not?
2. The message described loneliness as feeling disconnected, lacking purpose, lacking belonging, and lacking meaningful or close relationships. Which of those four areas do you find most difficult in your own life right now?
3. The message pointed out that Adam was with Eve when she took the fruit in Genesis 3:6. What does it say about the nature of sin and loneliness that even perfect community in the garden did not protect them from the fall?

Exploring the Gospel

4. Hebrews 10:19-23 describes the confidence we have to draw near to God because of what Jesus accomplished. In your own words, how does the gospel address the root cause of loneliness rather than just the symptoms?
5. The message said, "Sin makes us afraid to be truly known." Have you ever experienced that in a community setting? What made it difficult to be honest or vulnerable?
6. The message described the gospel as giving us confidence to draw near to Jesus rather than run, hide, or blame-shift. What does drawing near to Jesus look like practically in your daily life?

Exploring the Four Communities

7. The message outlined four contexts of community modeled by Jesus: the 500 (the crowd), the 72 (shared purpose in serving), the 12 (small group belonging), and the 3 (close, truth-telling relationships). Which of these do you feel most connected to right now? Which feels most absent?
8. The message made the case that attending a Sunday gathering alone is not the finish line for community. Do you agree? What has your experience taught you about the limits of a Sunday morning gathering?
9. The message described the "three" as people who "love you enough to tell you the truth" and who also "embody the love of Jesus at your worst." Do you have someone like that in your life? What has that relationship meant to you?
10. The message noted that you cannot sign up online to have a deep, truth-telling friendship. It requires boldness and intentionality. What is one thing that holds you back from pursuing or offering that kind of relationship?

Reflection Questions

Take a few quiet moments individually before sharing with the group.

- Which of the four community contexts do you most need to invest in right now?
- Is there someone in your life who may be lonelier than they appear? What is one step you could take this week to move toward them?
- Eugene Peterson is quoted in the message as saying, "There can be no maturity in the spiritual life, no obedience in following Jesus, no wholeness in the Christian life apart from immersion in and the embrace of community." How does that statement challenge or encourage you?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose at Least One:

- Make Sunday gathering a consistent priority rather than a when-it-is-convenient habit. Put it on your calendar as a non-negotiable commitment.
- Sign up to serve in a ministry area at your church. Identify one area where your gifts could be used alongside others.
- If you are not currently in a small group, sign up for one. If you are already in one, identify someone in your life who is not and personally invite them to join.
- Identify one or two people who could be your "three." Reach out to them this week. Be honest about what you are looking for and ask if they would be willing to go deeper with you.
- Pray specifically and by name for someone you know who is experiencing loneliness. Then consider whether God is calling you to take a step toward them beyond prayer.

Closing Prayer

Close your group time by praying together. Consider praying specifically for:

- Those in the group who are experiencing loneliness right now
 - Courage to pursue deeper community rather than waiting for it to come to you
 - A greater awareness of the people around you who are hurting and hidden
 - Confidence to draw near to Jesus, especially in the moments when shame makes you want to run
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Recommended Reading

The book of Hebrews is referenced throughout this message as essential context for Hebrews 10:24-25. Consider reading through it individually or as a group before your next meeting, paying particular attention to the themes of drawing near to God and the confidence we have because of Jesus.