



Made For More Community
Aug 26: Made for More Community

Series Summary: Groups begin with time to connect. We're not just here to sit in a circle. We're here to know others and be known by others. Second, we open our Bibles together. We don't just study information. We want to know and live the Word of God. Third, we open our hands to serve and care for one another. In a small group, everyone matters, and everyone contributes. There is no such thing as a spectator.

Big Idea: What exactly is the purpose of small groups? What is a healthy church community supposed to look like? Tonight is to set the stage for our groups for the rest of year.

Schedule:

- Live teaching
- Small group

LIVE TEACHING

Welcome back to small groups! I'm looking forward to what all the Lord has in store for this year! We all need people to help us follow Jesus. Groups are one of the places that we find those friends.

Many of you are small group veterans, but for some, this is your first time connecting to a group. Thank you so much for coming. It can be scary and intimidating, but you made it, and that's a good thing. Let me tell you what a typical group looks like so you know what to expect.

Series Lead in: First, groups begin with time to connect. We're not just here to sit in a circle. We're here to know others and be known by others. Second, we open our Bibles together. We don't just study information. We want to know and live the Word of God. As we learn together, we grow together. Third, we open our hearts in

prayer. Share as you feel comfortable, and know that your group is praying for you. Fourth, we open our hands to serve and care for one another. In a small group, everyone matters, and everyone contributes. There is no such thing as a spectator.

As a church, our vision is to build relationships that build disciples. We want everyone to connect to a community that will help them grow as disciples of Jesus. But our vision is even bigger than people sitting in circles as they connect with one another.

We want to be a church that answers Jesus' prayer in John 17. That's why we are kicking off groups with a look at what Jesus prayed for Himself, His disciples, and us. As we study together, I hope that each and every one of us fully commits to building relationships that build us as disciples and answer Jesus' prayer.

Let me tell you about Jesus' prayer in John 17. First, Jesus prays this prayer the evening before He was arrested, just before He went to the cross. When you see this prayer as some of His final words before the cross. Its importance can't be missed. Second, John 17 is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. Many know and recite the Lord's Prayer, but the prayer in John 17 is one we live, not just say. Third, Jesus' prayer will challenge each of us to see that we are MADE FOR MORE COMMUNITY. And living in community on mission with Jesus is always best for us. Catch Jesus' purpose for His prayer and His call on our lives.

JOHN 17:13 ¹³ I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

Jesus is praying so that we will have the full measure of His joy in our lives. Not surface-level happiness. Not temporary excitement. But a deep, full, lasting joy that comes from knowing God and living the life you were created for.

Over the next three weeks, we will unpack and apply Jesus' full prayer in John 17, but don't miss this: His prayer is for your joy!

Will you commit to the kind of relationships that lead to that kind of joy? Because that kind of life doesn't happen accidentally. It happens through intentional community.

So, my question: will you commit to living in relationships that will bring joy to your life? Here's what it looks like to commit to community.

1. Commit to Attending: Be here because your group needs you and you need your group.
2. Keep Confidences: What is said here stays here. Trust grows when people feel safe.

3. Engage Consistently: Groups work best when everyone shares and allows others to do the same. Your voice matters. Your questions matter. Your encouragement matters. So, don't hold back. Participate fully in the group.
4. Take Risks: It can be scary to build new friendships. But it is so worth the risk. It can be risky to speak the truth in love to someone you love, but it's worth the risk. Because you are building more than friendships in this group, you are experiencing and living in Biblical community.

JOHN 17:24-26 ²⁴“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Here's what Jesus is saying: *I want them close to Me. I want them to know God. I want them to experience My love. I want My life in them.*

This is the relationship we were made for. You were made for more than attending church.

You were made to **know God**, to **experience His love**, and to **live that out with others**. And that's what this group is about.

If you lean in, this group can change your life. Not because the group is perfect. But because God works through people who show up, open up, and grow together.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

1. **What makes a group meaningful versus just another weekly meeting?**
2. **How do you think God wants to use this group in your life this semester?**

3. Which of the group commitments is easiest for you? Which is the hardest?

- Attending Regularly
- Keeping Confidences
- Engaging Consistently
- Taking Risks Relationally

Leader Note: Attending regularly looks like every single week for some people. However, others due to school stuff, sports, or other family needs may have to define “regular” a bit differently. It may help to remind students that attending regularly is about priority more.

4. The vision of the church is to build relationships that build disciples. What do you think distinguishes a friendship or even an acquaintance from a disciple-making relationship?

Leader Note: feel free to use many of the characteristics of a disciple making relationship that were discussed at the leader huddle last week.

READ: JOHN 17:24-26 AS A GROUP

5. Lead-in: Jesus’ prayer was that the love that God the Father has for Him (the Son) would be found in us. Not that we would gain more of God’s love but that we would grow in our understanding and appreciation for God’s love. To do this we have to understand how special God’s love is.

How is God’s love unique? How is it inherently different than what we often call love?

6. What has helped you grow in your understanding of God’s love and your relationship with Jesus recently?

Leader Note: Many people may point to spiritual disciplines as habits, such as scripture or prayer, that have helped them grow in their relationship with Christ. That is not a bad answer, as spiritual disciplines should do just that. But God can also use difficulty and hardships to help us better understand God’s love. Encourage this idea as well.

PRAYER TIME

Spend time praying together and take requests from the group. Thank God for bringing the group together. Pray for openness and trust. Pray for real relationships to form. Pray that each person would grow in knowing God.