

Week 3 | Better Together Discussion Guide



How to Use This Discussion Guide

• Use the questions in each section below as a springboard for discussion. Do not feel like you have to follow the study guide religiously or hit every question. Sometimes you will only need 1 or 2 questions in a section. These questions are designed to help spark discussion. Refer to them as needed. Your goal is to get to the Application Questions. We want to make sure we are responding to the truths of God for us.

BACKGROUND FOR THE LEADER: Thank you for helping connect people in Authentic Relationships!

Today's passage gives us a clear glimpse into the daily lives of the early church. The early Christians were so unified in spirit that Luke described them as being "of one heart and mind" (v. 32). Their lives were marked by connection, care, generosity, and selflessness. When someone in their midst had a physical need, someone stepped up to make sure it was met. We're given one tangible example of their love for each other in verses 36-37. Barnabas, widely recognized for his encouraging nature, sold a piece of land and gave the proceeds to the apostles who would distribute it as needed. It's important to note here that the act of giving one's possessions was not a requirement for the early church, but rather an act of kindness left to the discretion of the giver. Barnabas freely gave for the benefit of others. When people gave, the apostles would use the proceeds to attend to the known needs.

The key is that God has designed, wired, called, equipped, and desires us to be authentically connected together. We are better together. Let this guide your discussion today..

Connection

1. When have you felt united with others in a common cause? Remind group members that their answers do not have to be "spiritual." What was that like? How did that affect your outlook and the effectiveness of the project, team, or opportunity?

Engage God's Word - Read [Acts 4:32-35](#) as a group, if time, also see [Acts 2:42-47](#)

Discussion:

1. How should these verses guide our actions and attitudes today? Consider dividing your discussion of this question into two sections: 1) How should these verses guide our actions as individuals; and 2) How should these verses guide our actions as a group?
2. What are the blessings and benefits of growing in unity as a congregation? In what ways have you experienced these blessings and benefits in your own life?
3. What words or phrases would you use to describe the community of believers and their actions in these verses?
4. What attitudes toward connection, compassion, and giving do you see reflected in Acts 4:32? What motivated the early Christians' generosity?
5. As followers of Jesus, constantly being transformed and connected more and more like Jesus - What strengths should the church community have that can't be found in any other organization?

Review these main points from the weekend message with your group:

Sunday, Jonathon shared that:

WHEN I ENGAGE IN AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS I MEET OFTEN.

- We believe this: **no one will know everyone, but everyone must know someone.** Someone who's walking with us in our best days to celebrate with us. And someone who's walking with us in our worst days to carry us through.
- We want to see **80% of those attending regularly in a small group.**

WHEN I ENGAGE IN AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS I GROW SPIRITUALLY.

- **Hebrews 10:23-25** *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* (NIV)

WHEN I ENGAGE IN AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS WE SERVE THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

- Here's what we will value:
- Transformation over Information
- Application over Understanding
- Doer over Listener (James 1:22)
- People Focused vs. Personal Focused

Application Questions:

1. What changes would happen at Northland, and in Topeka, if all our families reflected this Acts 4 (and Acts 2) type of connection and community? How important would it be to pursue this with all our efforts and intentionality as a group - and as a church body?
2. How would you describe the relationship between generosity and encouragement? How have you been encouraged by the example of someone's generosity?
3. How has your walk with Jesus been positively impacted by being connected to an authentic community? How might your story be able to encourage others to connect in this way as well? Who do you know that is not in a regular group?
4. What can we surrender to contribute to the unity and purpose of the church?
5. What's one current need in your church that your group can meet? How can your group demonstrate the kind of sacrificial giving we see in Acts 4:32-37?
6. In what specific ways could you encourage someone through generosity this week?

Pray for It and Apply It:

- Who can your group pray for that is in need or hurting? After praying, have someone reach out to check on them and see what practical steps can be taken to bring encouragement, help, and love to that family. Could you invite them to join your small group? Or help them connect (or create) to another small group? (If this happens, please let pastor Doug know: groups@northland.cc)