

loving Jesus and loving my friends...

THE ESSENTIALS

Community

staying connected to one another

Why is being in community so important for us and our campus?

How do we do it?

Community

Scripture Verses

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.”

John 17:20-23 (NIV)

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he 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 2:42-47 (NIV)

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another— and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)

Short Thoughts

We saw in the last section that abiding is a plural action. Jesus tells us to be IN Him... together.

From beginning to end, community is very clearly important to the Lord. God doesn't just love community, **God IS community!** God is The Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. EVERYTHING Jesus did was done in community with His Father and the Holy Spirit.

Being a community is about more than just hanging out. It's about doing life together, being a family, sharing a purpose and loving others together. It is abiding in Jesus... together.

Jesus is all about being others-centered and being in true community is just that. It teaches us to put others before ourselves, to love and serve others first. Community is practice for the way Jesus asks us to live in the world.

Community is also where we find healing in our brokenness. God uses others to speak into our lives, to love on us and to walk through hard times with us. When we extend this community to others, Jesus says that the world WILL come to know Him. Our broken world is longing for community and connection! You have the opportunity to provide a great example of healthy community for everyone on your campus. In your youth group.

SO this is how you share Jesus with the world... together!

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Community

Solo Exercise... *this solo exercise is an opportunity for you to work alone through some questions about the role of Jesus-centered community in your life.*

Read and answer the questions about community below:

- Why do you need to be in community?

- Sometimes it's hard to be with the people we need most, so instead we choose to hang out with those who keep things on a surface level. Do you relate to this? Write down why or why not.

- In what ways do you resist being in community and being real with others?

- List the people in your life who have played a role in connecting you to Jesus at some point in your life. What made their relationship so important to you? How did it change you?

- Do you currently have a real community in your life? If so, where? If not, why not? What's keeping you from pursuing it?

- For you, how might being in community encourage you in your relationship with Jesus?

- Name some ways being in community makes you more effective in loving others on your campus for Jesus.

Solo Challenge...

Do you have some real community in your life? If not, what are you waiting for? Try and take the first step. Pick up the phone and call someone within the next few weeks.

Community

Team Exercise... *this team exercise is an opportunity for you and your community or campus team to answer some questions and practice being together in community.*

- Together, write out how there is a sense of community in your team.
- Pray and then talk together how your team can go deeper in relationship together and become a more tight-knit community who abides together. What is God saying to your team?

Below is an exercise that is simply called “**Share, Pray, Discover.**” Do this exercise together. This is a great resource and model for your ministry team meetings and a great way to go deeper in community together. You don't have to do everything in every meeting...you can pick and choose and switch things around.

SHARE:

- A story about what God has done in your life since you last met.
- A story about what God is doing in your relationships with the peers God has put on your heart to love and reach out to.
- Prayer requests for those peers.
- Personal prayer requests.

PRAY:

- For your campus and for the needs that can be met on that campus.
- Pray for each other, as missionaries, and for the requests that were expressed.
- Pray for the peers God has placed on your heart.
- Pray the Spirit would lead your team and empower you to love others on campus.

DISCOVER:

- What can you specifically do this week to seek out and show love to those peers God has placed on your heart?
- What are some things you can do to tangibly meet those identified "needs" on your campus (or with your peers) and serve like Christ did?
- What step of faith are you willing to take for a friend that might bring them closer to Jesus?
- What are some other things you feel the Spirit is calling your team to actively do on your campus (that will meet needs and benefit your personal ministries)?

Team Challenge... Are you and your team serious about being a community who reflects the love of Christ? Are you ready to take some risks for the sake of deeper community? Here's a real challenge for you:

***Get a bucket, some water and some towels and wash each other's feet (aka John 13:14)!
We're serious. WE DARE YOU!***