5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Building Christ-Centered Community

Day 1: Love as the Mark of a Disciple Reading: John 13:31-35 Devotional: Jesus does not simply command his followers to be friendly or agreeable. He sets an entirely different standard: love one another as he has loved us. His love moved toward the rejected, the broken, and the hostile. It went to the cross. When the world looks at the church, the question is not whether we have good programs or polished gatherings, but whether our love for one another is unmistakably different from anything the world can produce on its own. Examine the relationships in your church community today. Does the love present there require Jesus to explain it, or could it exist without him?

Day 2: The Danger of Turning Inward Reading: Genesis 3:6-10 Devotional: The first consequence of sin in the garden was not punishment but withdrawal. Adam and Eve hid. They covered themselves. They moved away from God and from one another. Sin has been turning people inward ever since. It whispers that isolation is safety, that vulnerability is weakness, and that self-protection is wisdom. But God came walking in the garden calling out, exposing the hiding for what it was. Community is part of God's answer to the inward pull of sin. When we press into honest, Christ-centered relationships, we are resisting one of sin's oldest and most persistent strategies against us.

Day 3: Stirring One Another Toward Christ Reading: Hebrews 10:23-25 Devotional: The writer of Hebrews does not call believers to simply tolerate one another or coexist peacefully in the same building. The call is active and intentional: consider how to stir one another up to love and good works. The word stir carries the image of provocation, of agitation in the best sense. Genuine Christian community is not a comfortable holding pattern. It is a community of people who care enough about each other's spiritual lives to ask hard questions, offer honest encouragement, and refuse to let one another drift. Neglecting to gather is not a neutral choice. It weakens the whole body.

Day 4: The Gospel as the Foundation of True Community Reading: 1 John 4:9-12 Devotional: John makes clear that the love Christians are called to share with one another does not originate with us. It originates with God, who demonstrated it fully in sending his Son. We love because he first loved us. This means that Christ-centered community is not built on shared interests, similar backgrounds, or compatible personalities. It is built on a shared experience of being loved by God when we deserved nothing of the kind. That foundation makes it possible to love people who are difficult, different, or draining. The gospel does not just motivate community. It makes a certain kind of community possible that nothing else can produce.

Day 5: Being Known and Knowing Others Reading: Romans 12:9-16 Devotional: Paul's vision of Christian community in Romans 12 is remarkably specific. It involves genuine affection, honoring others above yourself, sharing in both joy and sorrow, and practicing hospitality. None of this happens at a surface level. It requires the willingness to be known and to know others beyond the comfortable and convenient. Many people sit in churches for years without experiencing this kind of belonging. The responsibility does not rest only with pastors or leaders. Every believer is called to be a connector, to notice the person sitting alone, to ask the deeper question, and to build the kind of relationships that make the love of Christ visible and credible to a watching world.