



THE GATHERING WELL

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN PRACTICE

A KNOWING JESUS GROWTH GUIDE



BUILDING COMMUNITY IN PRACTICE

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THE HEART OF *knowing Jesus*

The Gathering Well uses these three focus areas of Spiritual Formation to support our approach to the journey of faith.



BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Communication with God is our starting point. Any resources with this icon are designed to support and equip you to pray, using Scripture as our primary lens and providing questions and prompts to encourage you to talk with God consistently.



STUDY THE BIBLE

All of our resources are anchored in the truth of God's Word. This icon will indicate spaces where you will engage the Scriptures. We seek to provide educational resources and tools that will help God's Word come alive to you.



BUILD COMMUNITY

We believe that the life of faith is expressed in community, not isolation. Resources and prompts marked with this icon are geared toward reminding you that we are designed to be in relationship with God *and* with others.

THE PRACTICE OF BUILDING COMMUNITY



The practice of building community is one that can be incredibly diverse for individuals, ministries, organizations, and churches. It is also a process that does not have a perfect timeline. **It is never too early or too late to build community as God invites us to.** Circumstances, environments, and other differences can make the practice of building community look unique and diverse for different people. However, there are **practical principles** that encourage us to build community right where we are, despite these differences.



Pray for people. Consider the prompts below and pray for those people by name today, this week, this month, and this year.

Who in your life already knows and loves Jesus and can be someone God wants to use to help you grow in your relationship with Him?

Who in your life doesn't know and love Jesus that you can pursue relationship with, opening up opportunities to share the love of Jesus with them?



As you are going. we invite you to think about your daily, your weekly, and/or your monthly rhythms. What are things you're doing, places you're going, and ways you're living that you can invite someone to join you in?

Places I'm already going:

Activities already on my calendar:

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Inviting someone into your life and creating space for them to join you for meals, moments, and other aspects of life will help build community. Seeking ways to be available to the invitations of others is another practical way to do this, too.

Evaluate and meditate on the pace of your life today. This is not a time to accept any shame about your pace. This is **an invitation to submit the rhythms of your regular, everyday life to God** and ask His wisdom ask you make decisions about your time.

	ALMOST NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	ALMOST ALWAYS
1 I regularly live and move at a pace that leaves room for others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 I regularly live and move at a pace that is hurried and busy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 The rhythms of my life occasionally create space for connection, but often I am rushing to the next thing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 My weekly rhythm includes intentional time for deepening relationships, not just managing tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now that you've assessed your pace and margin a bit, sit with this: are there places you can pull back so that you can take intentional steps towards building community? What in your life rhythms could you exchange or change, in order to be available to say "yes" to someone's invitation?

PRACTICING CONFESSION



God invites us to confess our sins to Him and also to one another (see: 1 John 1:9 and James 5:16). We practice confession in community for the purpose of teaching and encouraging one another. It is not for the purpose of condemning or telling on one another. Confession is a personal practice of vulnerability. It's important to practice confession in safe and healthy ways. If you're not sure how to do this, connect with pastoral staff at your church or with The Gathering Well team today.



Pray for people. Pray and ask the Lord to reveal 1 - 2 other people who will commit to the practice of confession with you. Jot down names that come to mind and commit to praying for them and asking God to lead you with wisdom.



As you are going about the rhythms of your life, set a consistent time and method of connecting with one another for the purpose of confession and exhortation. What are some days/times that are open (or that you could choose to open) for this?



NEXT STEPS

Put it into practice. Once you have a "holy green light", connect with the people God placed in your thoughts and begin setting up a time to gather consistently for confession and encouragement.

- ✿ Use this time to share, pray, and look to Scripture for guidance and accountability.
- ✿ Ask one another how God is leading you away from sin and if there is practical a step you can take together.
- ✿ Always take time to thank God for His forgiveness, made possible by the Advocate, Jesus Christ, the righteous! (See 1 John 2:1)



GUIDED CONFESSION

It can feel overwhelming to start practicing consistent confession with those around you. Use the following prompts as a guide to begin your practice.

Pray and ask the Lord to reveal any places in your heart where you have not been completely open and honest. Ask Him to show you where you have been led into sin. Write down what He reveals.

Ask God for forgiveness for your sins and to reveal to you how you can leave that sin struggle behind. As you confess your sin to others, talk with them about a next step you can take to move towards Jesus. Write down a step below.

One of the gifts of confession is that once we have confessed our sin and sought forgiveness, we no longer live under condemnation for our sin. Ask the Lord to release you from the burden of guilt or shame regarding your sin. If you are struggling with this, share it with a friend and ask them to pray over you. Write down a statement of freedom below.

PRACTICING FELLOWSHIP



God invites us to be faithful as He is faithful. We practice faithful fellowship in community as a way to grow in relationships as we are going. Fellowship should not be reserved for the good times or the convenient times. Fellowship is a practice of corporate worship!



Pray for people. Pray and ask the Lord to reveal 1-2 people you can practice faithful fellowship with.



As you are going about the rhythms of your life, set a consistent time and method of connecting with one another for the purpose of sharing meals and moments.



NEXT STEPS

Put it into practice. Once you have a “holy green light”, connect with the people God placed in your thoughts and begin setting up a time to gather consistently.

Remember that “consistent” doesn’t have to mean daily or weekly. But it does mean we gather frequently and faithfully.

- ✿ Sharing meals is a great way to create an opportunity to grow in more intentional relationships with friends. Brainstorm some intentional questions you can ask at meal times.
- ✿ Sharing difficult or exciting moments allows you to connect more deeply with friends. Think of a moment coming up soon or that you’re currently going through that you can share with someone right now.
- ✿ Get creative! Put technology to the service of connection: consider using voice memos or video sharing to connect for mutual encouragement in between your in-person gatherings.

****Only consider this if technology doesn’t have a strong hold on your time and attention. Where possible, in person fellowship is always a richer option!**



MAKE IT ATTAINABLE

Write down some consistent, practical, and specific things that you can do to incorporate fellowship into your rhythms and routines. Consider the prompts below.

Consistent -- weekly, monthly, quarterly -- what does "consistency" look like for you in your life, family, stage, and circumstance?

Practical -- think meals & moments -- How might you invite others to join you in the rhythms you already have in place?

Specific -- information alone does not lead to transformation -- what's the step you can take towards a specific person and in a specific way to actually practice faithful fellowship? (Pssst, just do it!)

PRACTICING SERVING



Scripture often points to a life of “one another-ing”, that we might love one another, serve one another, and carry one another’s burdens. What can it look like for you to “one another” with the people around you? This can be serving each other in practical ways or serving others together to meet tangible needs.



Pray for people. Pray and ask the Lord to reveal 1-2 people you can serve or you can allow to serve you.



As you are going about the rhythms of your life, set a consistent time and method of connecting with one another for the purpose of serving.



NEXT STEPS

Put it into practice. Once you have a “holy green light”, connect with the people God placed in your thoughts and begin setting up ways to consistently serve those around you, to meet needs as they arise.

- ✿ Start by talking together about what ways you can serve one another or others. Be specific.
- ✿ Discuss how you can set up your life (availability, financial commitments, etc.) to practice intentional service regularly.
- ✿ Use the tools on the next page to help you think creatively: where are you already living and working? Are there needs in your neighborhood or workplace that would be a natural on-ramp to serving? What do you love and feel passionate about? Find out if there are hands-on ways to serve in those areas in your community.



MAKE IT APPLICABLE

Think about the areas where you can practice “one another-ing”. Consider your spheres of influence. In each of these areas, think about how you serve those around you.

- * Who in this place can I love?
- * How can I love them?
- * What practical next step can I take?

AT HOME

AT _____

AT CHURCH

PRACTICING HOSPITALITY



Jesus is the perfect example of hospitality. He often connected with people outside His circle, especially those considered unworthy of value and dignity. He had a way of making them feel valued and seen. We practice inviting others who do not always know or love Jesus in order to show them the hospitality of grace and mercy He has to offer.



Pray for people. Pray and ask the Lord to reveal 1-2 people who may not know or love Jesus like you do with whom you can practice hospitality. Consider volunteering with an organization that can help you connect with strangers.



As you are going about the rhythms of your life, set a consistent time and method of practicing hospitality. Is this volunteering regularly with an underserved population? Opening your home for a meal?



NEXT STEPS

Put it into practice. Once you have a “holy green light”, connect with the people God placed in your thoughts and begin setting up a ways to consistently serve those around you, to meet needs as they arise.

- ✿ Start by getting to know someone different than you. Seek to know them by asking questions about their life with compassionate curiosity.
- ✿ Allow them to share their experiences with you and do your best to create a space where they feel safe and valued.
- ✿ Practicing hopeful hospitality is something you can do personally and, often, alongside others. Who could you invite to join you in your desire to seek, serve, and love others that don't know or love Jesus yet? Use the tools on the next page to work this out practically.



MAKE IT REAL

Think about your gifts (the things you're good at, feel are a strength, or a talent you have) and the gifts of others. How can you use these things to serve others, meet people where they are, and share with them to be hopeful in hospitality towards them?

Taking your unique gifting into consideration, list two or three ways you can help create a friendly and generous setting for others.

List two or three people in your circle and the ways they could help create a friendly and generous setting for others.

Who can you serve that's different than you or who does not know Jesus yet?

What organization can you connect with that serves a vulnerable population in your community?

When can you invite someone different than you or who does not yet know Jesus to gather together at your home or another person's home?

PRACTICING MULTIPLICATION



The purpose of building community is to build the Kingdom of God. It may be tempting to build community that is convenient for yourself. It may also be tempting to build a convenient community for others while neglecting your need to be nourished and challenged to be more like Christ. Giving into either of these temptations hinders us from living out the purpose of building community.



Pray for people. Pray and ask the Lord to reveal 1-2 people that you can invite into a next step to grow towards Christ. Maybe it's joining your small group, or leading a prayer time, or stepping away from a sin they are struggling with.



As you are going about the rhythms of your life, consider: do you have a multiplication mindset? How you are making room for new people in your circles? Do you look for opportunities to help people take a next step towards Jesus?



NEXT STEPS

Put it into practice. Start by asking the Lord to reveal those around you that you can encourage to move towards Him. Plan intentional conversations with people in your life that help them see their value to God. Take a peek at these ideas and then brainstorm some more of your own!

- ✿ "I don't know if anyone has ever told you, but here is something I see in you..."
- ✿ "You know, one of the blessings of having you in my life is...."
- ✿ "I was thinking recently of the way I see God producing [endurance or patience or joy or...] in you during this season and I wanted to call it out!"
- ✿ "You are a reflection of God's creativity and love—fearfully and wonderfully made. I love the way you"



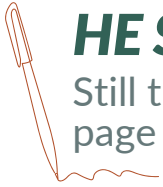
MAKE IT REAL

Three steps of practicing multiplication are to know others, grow towards Christ with others, and go with others. Use the prompts below to help you practice each of these steps.

Everyone has a desire to connect with others and to feel valuable. When we look at Matthew 28, we see that we must know one another in order to lead one another. What step can you take to know someone in your circle more intimately and invite them to know you more intimately?

As we make disciples, we are also called to “teach others to obey all that Jesus has commanded.” The most loving thing we can do as sisters and brothers in Christ is to help one another to grow in Christ. How can you invite someone to grow with Christ alongside you?

The command in the great commission is to **go**. Through the power of Christ, we are invited to think outwardly. This is why we encourage you to be on mission to multiply wherever you are. Where can you practice an outward focus and begin serving Christ, and invite someone to serve with you? How can you go out into the world with the love of Jesus?



HE SEES ME HERE

Still thinking? Still reflecting? Have questions? Here you go: use this page as you wish for your own prayers and musings.

A large rectangular area filled with a light gray dot grid pattern, intended for writing or reflection.



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