NEXT LEVEL

SERIES BIG IDEA
Next Level friendships help us grow in our relationship with God.

MESSAGE BIG IDEA
Next Level friendships start with availability.

SCRIPTURE
Ephesians 4:16, Mark 2:1-12

ICEBREAKER
If something hugely important were to happen, who would be the first people you'd tell? Why them? And would you call or text?

OPENING THOUGHT
We're so used to connecting shallowly to people, to typing out quick emails or quick texts, that connecting in deeper ways is harder and harder to manage. How often do you make time to talk to the people in your lives? With no phones and the only agenda to spend time connecting. Where would you rank that as a priority in your friendships?

BIBLE DISCUSSION
1. Read Mark 2:1-12, who do you identify with in this passage?
2. Read Ephesians 4:11-16, what struck you?
3. Where do you see yourself in the body of believers? What part do/could you play?

LIFE APPLICATION
4. We live in a very connected world, we're always accessible through our phones or email, but does that mean that we're available? In what ways does being more accessible mean that we're less available?
5. 25% of Americans say they have no one to turn to in hard times, and that number has actually dropped (not risen) over the last 20 years of the social media boom. Have you experienced this loss of connection?
6. Have there been times when you've had friends help you with difficulties? What was that like? Do you know someone who needs that kind of friendship?
7. Do you remember when connecting in a small group seemed intimidating? What were your fears? How can you use that knowledge to bring comfort to others who might have those same fears?
8. Who is on your heart right now to pray for?

CHALLENGE
Spend some time as a group praying for the people in our lives who need next-level friendships. Where can you enter into their lives, even when it's hard? How can you show genuine love and care for them? Pray as a group for those opportunities.