

Message Big Idea

We're created for community. We're wired for connection. We experience community in a small group.

Scripture

Acts 2:42-47

Points to Keep In Mind

1. The opening questions should get the group thinking about what makes for a good community. While it might be hard for us to imagine how our community might be like what's described in Acts, we can take intentional steps to live as though we are like a family.
2. The way Luke describes the early church is astonishing to us today and would have been to its first readers. The language Luke used to describe the early church was familiar to other sects and groups of his day in their descriptions of their utopian dreams. Luke seems to be saying that the ideal community cannot be established by any man-made philosophy but only by the power of the Holy Spirit. See the following excerpt from Craig Keener: "The language Luke employs here is typical of the language other ancient writers used for ideal, sometimes even utopian, communities; it is, in other words, very positive language. At the same time, the sharing it depicts was very rare.

Among exceptions, ancient writers report that the Jewish sect of Essenes (with an estimated 4,000 members) lived without private property, sharing everything in common; the Dead Sea Scrolls confirm this report at least for the community in the desert. Likewise, some Greek idealist sects such as the Pythagoreans rejected private property.

By contrast, the early Christians sold property whenever anyone had need (4:34–35); they valued people more than property without rejecting private property altogether. They did not go as far as the Essenes or Pythagoreans, but they went much farther than the vast proportion of ancient society. Greek associations typically met once a month. Except for the most radical sects, the daily sharing here is unusual in antiquity and most resembles how people treated members of their own family."

3. Jesus said others would know us by the way we love one another. When we look at the life of Jesus, we see that for him, loving others meant serving them well. In fact, at the beginning of chapter 13, Jesus washes his disciples' feet. That was an act of radical servanthood. Jesus frequently went out of his way to serve and love others. He associated with those thought to be on the "outside" of society and those labeled sinners. If we were to love and serve others as Jesus did, we should not be surprised to find ourselves pushed outside our comfort zones.
4. If your small group has been together for a while, this is an excellent week to check-in to see how everyone feels about the group. Your small group will never be perfect, so relax and have a good conversation about one or two things the group could do better. For the most part, people will want to be nice and not want to appear to criticize the group, so by asking for "one way" the group could improve takes the pressure off of people and allows them to focus their thoughts.

Additional Questions and Resources

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism
4. See Community Cares for some ways your group can serve others: communitychristian.org/cares