

Week 6 - Community

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
- Jesus (John 13:34-35)

Community life can be one of the most beautiful aspects of following Jesus, but also one of the most heartbreaking. All of us have most likely experienced some degree of hurt and pain in community life. Sometimes, we may feel it is easier to just be "Jesus and me." Yet, Jesus continually calls us to life in community. When we say yes to life with Jesus, we say yes to life as part of the Body of Christ. As the Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12, each member of the Body is valuable and worthy of care and honor. Each member has gifts to contribute to the healthy growth and flourishing of the Body. It is not easy nor perfect, but as we seek to love one another, empowered by the Spirit, our community becomes a living breathing picture of the love and belonging that is found in Jesus. In this time of pandemic, many of us may feel disconnected from one another. We invite you to take one step towards connecting with each other with this week's spiritual discipline of **community**.

Here are some suggestions for how we can practice **community** this week:

- Reach out with care - Whether to a member of your small group or another member of our community, take time this week to connect and care. Start with texting or calling. Maybe drop by with their favorite snack.
- Listen with love - The next time you find yourself in conversation with someone else, settle in to really listen and hear the heart of the other person. Refrain from interrupting or commenting too much. Maybe ask a few questions to encourage them to share more. Give the gift of listening, wanting to really hear what is on their heart and receiving it with care.
- Say thank you - Think of someone in your life that you are thankful for. Write a note of encouragement to them. Write what you appreciate and love about the other person. A handwritten note is always wonderful to receive, but an email or text is also a good start!
- Look for a way to serve - Think about the groups you are connected to at church. Is there a way you can practically serve and give of your time? Take a moment to sit down and consider, what might this person or group need? What would bless them? When you think of an idea, act on it this week!

Questions for Reflection

1. Who are the people that you are regularly connecting with? What are those relationships about?
2. Who are the people who have walked with you in growing as a person? How can you be walking with others?