



CONNECT

Connecting with Others

#npconnect

Week 2
2 of 3

January 22, 2017

Bottom Line: We were created for community.

Icebreaker: What club, team, or group gave you your first sense of belonging to a community outside of your own family? How old were you?

Key Verse: *Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Hebrews 10:23-25

God, the Creator, decreed isolation was not good for humans. He created us to live in community, in thriving, healthy relationships. We are designed and wired to need the input of others in our lives, and the need to invest in theirs as well. We develop physical, spiritual, and emotional ailments when our need for community is ignored or unmet.

Fortunately, God also designed the perfect setup for us to find the community we crave – the Church. We're talking about the Church (capital C) – the people, not the church (little c), a building. The writer to the Hebrews tells us that the Church helps us hold on to hope, and encourages us toward love and good deeds. Because of that, we should prioritize our connections there, even more so as the culture around us deteriorates and loses the skills of good people connections.

The four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tell the story of Jesus and salvation. The Book of Acts tells how the early church set the template for sharing that good news relentlessly with the whole world. The Book of Revelation tells the culmination of history when everyone who has a relationship with God will be together forever in our eternal home. Everything in between is a very practical how-to manual on following Jesus Christ. It's filled with community. In fact, the words "one another" are used 100 times, telling us how to live in the most important connections in life. There are 59 "one another" commands. Things like love one another, forgive one another, comfort one another, build one another up, serve one another – you get the picture. Following Jesus is connecting first with God, and then being in healthy relationships with others. It's the God-designed way to live.

THINK IT OVER >>>

Thinking back on Dwight's message, what challenged you most?

Dwight reminded us that when we are not connected to others in healthy relationships, we're more likely to suffer physically, emotionally, and spiritually in some way. How have you seen that happen?

One third of the one another commands tell us to get along with each other; to have unity. Why do you think that is so important to God?

One third of the one another commands concentrate on loving one another, and 15% of the commands urge us to be humble with each other. How do humility and love fit together in relationships?

Dwight gave us three reasons for connecting: It keeps me from drifting; it keeps me relationally and spiritually healthy; and it keeps me connected with God. Which one speaks most to you today and why?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

Where are you currently finding fulfilling Christian community? What makes it helpful?

Hebrew 13:1-2 contains a great challenge and fascinating thought: *"Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it."* Community within the Church is to be like family love, brothers and sisters. What does that look like practically?

We are urged to take the initiative on connecting even with strangers, those not familiar to us, because some people who have done so found themselves connecting with angels. That's quite a thought! Have you ever taken the initiative in connecting with a stranger, building a relationship with him/her, and found yourself to be the one most blessed? How?

NEXT STEPS

This week, consider taking some next steps together as a group:

1. Thank God together for your fellowship. Together you are fulfilling one of God's three main purposes for you.
2. Discuss the community in your group. Are there areas you could improve? Transparency? Vulnerability? Serving? Listening?
3. Who needs your group?

EVALUATION/ACTION Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: We were created for community.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Day 1: 1 Thessalonians 4:18

Day 2: Colossians 3:13

Day 3: Galatians 5:13

Day 4: Galatians 6:2

Day 5: Romans 15:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Hebrews 12:23-25

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.
(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)