

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

(Acts 2:42-47)

## ***Making the Case for Community*** **LESSON 1: A God of Community**

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### **God is Community**

God is plural – *Genesis 1:26*

God is one – *Deuteronomy 6:4*

We are created in God's image, so, just as God is both plural and singular, so must the church be many and yet one. God expresses His very nature in the relationship of the Trinity – itself a small group – making the small group the natural human expression of the image of God.

God dwells in human community – *Matthew 18:20*

God built into each of us a deep need for the community that defines Him; His own interdependent nature shatters our quest for independence.

Not being Christian is no excuse – *Romans 1:20*

### **Jesus Models Community**

Immanuel = God with us

Christ drew crowds everywhere He went, but still understood the importance of the small group dynamic – *Mark 3:7-10, 13*

In surrounding Himself with twelve disciples, Jesus set a perfect example of relational interdependence; He knew real life change takes place in community. Pastor Eugene Peterson stated, "Jesus invested 90 percent of his time with twelve Jewish men so that he could reach all Americans."

### **Unity Requires Community**

*Community Lite:*

1. Fire Insurance
2. Buffet worship
3. Fellowship

These fall woefully short of the oneness that Christ desires for the church. Even though His disciples still didn't quite get it, Jesus' dying wish is for them to experience authentic community – *John 17:11, 20-23* (*Read this whole chapter this week. It will move you.*)

### **DISCUSSION:**

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Why do you think most people in America today feel so disconnected?

When have you felt most alone or isolated?

What is your concept of God's existence before creation?

When you hear the word "community", what pops into your head?

What do you see as the unique advantages in using small groups to build community?