

TAKEAWAY REFLECTION

Devoted Together Doing life together in Small Groups

INTRODUCTION

At Maybridge, one of our church values is 'we *do life together*', that's because community is such an important part of the journey as a disciple of Jesus. Jesus never intended for us to follow him alone – his invitation is to *be with him* in community (see Mark 3L14-19).

Preacher and theologian Tim Keller said: *'When God summons you into a relationship with himself, he also always summons you into a new community of people who also know him – that means you can't just come to church, even every week, and get inspiration and information and not submit yourself into a community. We are to be a new humanity, a new community of people who follow, believe in and know God.'*

Historically Christians have always met in homes or smaller settings and in the book of Acts we get a glimpse of what community life looked like. The early church seemed to thrive and grow as they were devoted to learning, doing life, remembering, eating and praying together. From their togetherness, despite their remarkable differentness, flowed: awe as God's presence was tangible among them, unity amid their differences, sacrificial generosity and rapid growth in those being saved.

This account of the Early church is an example that: **when followers of Jesus do life together in radically devoted, sacrificial, Jesus-centred small group community, people encounter Jesus, not only through the good news of the Gospel, but through experiencing Jesus' new kingdom – His new family – through shared life.**

READ

Acts 2:42-47

⁴² *'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. ⁴⁶They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.'*

REFLECT

Which of the habits, characteristics and aspects of shared life expressed in Acts stand out to you? What are some of the ways you can put these into practice?

How enthusiastic are you for doing life together with others? What compromises and commitments do you think it asks of you?

REFLECT & PRAY

Although what we see in Acts 2 is not a to-do list, but a model for life together as followers of Jesus, we've shared some challenges and practical ways we can put these devotions into practice. As you consider committing and participating in group life in September, spend some time reflecting and praying over these points and questions:

1. Could I join a group with people you don't know?

What gives me the best opportunity to demonstrate and grow in love for others?

2. How could I take part in building an inter-generational group?

How can I be part of building a group where I can be discipled and disciple others?

3. How can I make being part of a group a priority?

Where can I make space in my week to prioritise group community and shared life over other things?

4. Commit to sharing life and food together with others.

How can I become increasingly open to shared life and meals with others in the church community and in my group?

5. With whom do I need to work towards reconciliation?

Where do I need to do the work of forgiveness in order to fully participate in church and group community?

6. Could I lead a group?

Could I host a group that's focussed on learning, doing life, remembering, eating and praying together with others? Ask for God's help in considering this.

*Get in touch with Piero to find out more about leading a group at:
piero.regnante@maybridge.org.uk.*