



Island Groups

Abide • Connect • Share

Week of January 19, 2025

JUST DO IT – WEEK 3

THE PRACTICE OF CONNECTING

(ACTS 2:42-47)

Welcome to our discussion guide for Week 3 of our "Just Do It" series on Island Church's core practices. As we explore what it means to connect in biblical community, let's anchor our time in prayer.

OPENING PRAYER TIME

Take a few minutes to quiet your hearts and invite the Holy Spirit to speak powerfully through God's Word and our discussion. There are many ways your group can approach this opening prayer time. You might go around the circle, giving each person a chance to pray out loud as they feel led. The facilitator could guide the group through prayer by offering prompts related to the week's topic - for example:

- Thank God for the gift of Christian community and the model of the early church
- Confess any areas where you have neglected connecting deeply with other believers
- Ask the Spirit to show you how to prioritize the practices of fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer
- Pray for a willingness to share your burdens and your gifts within this church family.
- Lift up specific people you want to connect with more intentionally or invite into fellowship.

Another option is to incorporate a time of silence for personal reflection and listening, or to encourage members to voice simple one-word prayers of praise



and gratitude. The key is to allow room for the Spirit to lead, while still being intentional about prioritizing prayer.

As we talk about the importance of connecting in fellowship this week, let's not neglect the most crucial connection of all - our living relationship with Christ, cultivated through prayer. May our time together be marked by humble dependence, genuine worship, and openness to God's transforming presence among us. Remember, **PRAYER IS THE WORK** that empowers everything else! So let's commit to pursuing Him wholeheartedly as we gather.

DISCUSSION

Open the next segment by discussing the following questions with the group:

- Share about a time when being part of a community (church, family, team, etc.) really made a positive difference in your life. What made that experience so meaningful?
- What's one thing that makes it hard for you personally to fully engage in biblical community? Is it a past hurt, a fear, a busy schedule, or something else?

Have someone read aloud **Acts 2:42-47**, the foundational passage for this sermon series. What specific practices and attributes do you see in these verses? Which ones challenge you the most?

Pastor Charlie made this key statement: "**Community is not what we 'do' as a church; it is who we 'are' as a church.**" Do you agree with this? Why or why not? How have you experienced this reality at Island Church?

The sermon outlined three main reasons why connecting with other believers is so important:

1. We Need Others to Grow in Intimacy with God
2. We Need Others to Walk Through the Ups and Downs of Life
3. We Need Others to Accomplish the Mission

Which of these resonates with you most right now and why? How have you seen these needs met through biblical community?

One of the main ways we grow in intimacy with God through community is by practicing the New Testament "one another" commands (e.g. **Mark 9:50, Romans 12:16, Ephesians 4:32**, etc. – maybe ask group members to each find and read one of these out loud to the group). Which of these do you find most challenging to live out? Why?

Pastor Charlie stated, *"If we choose not to connect - we are purposefully hindering God's work in our life!"* Where have you experienced this dynamic of missing out on what God wants to teach you through other believers? What keeps us from fully engaging in community?

Ask someone to read **Acts 2:44-45** and have someone else read **Galatians 6:2**. What does it look like practically to meet needs and bear burdens within the church body? Share an example of how you've seen this lived out at Island Church.

Why is it important that we not only serve others but also share our own needs and hurts with our church family? What fears or barriers keep us from practicing this vulnerability?

Have someone read **1 Peter 4:10**. What are the dangers of being a "consumer" rather than a "contributor" in the church? How can we grow in using our gifts to connect with and serve the body?

Pastor Charlie highlighted that biblical community naturally leads to kingdom expansion, as our love for one another testifies to the transforming power of Christ (**John 13:35**). Where have you seen this missional overflow in action?

Consider this progression: "God connects us to Him, then He connects us to each other, then He connects us to those who are far from Him!" How does this shape your view of the importance of biblical community?

The sermon gave three practical steps to connect at Island Church:

1. Join a Small Group or Ministry Team
2. Meet Needs in the Body
3. Invite Others to Community

Which of these steps do you sense God calling you to take in this season? What would it look like to act on that this week? Pastor Charlie emphasized, "You need us. We need you." Why is it vital that we embrace our mutual need for one another in the church?

How does this challenge our individualistic tendencies? How can we as a group spur one another on to prioritize connecting in biblical community, even when it's hard? What next steps can we take together to be the family God intends?

APPLICATION

Examine the "one another" commands in Scripture and choose one to intentionally practice this week. Share it with the group for prayer and accountability.

Identify a burden you've been carrying alone lately. Take a step of faith to share it with a trusted brother or sister in Christ and ask for their support.

Prayerfully consider how you can use your gifts, resources, skills or time to serve others in the church in this season. Commit to one specific act of service this week.

Reach out to someone at Island Church that you don't know well yet. Invite them to share a meal, a conversation, or an activity together to deepen your connection.

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Take time to share prayer requests. Write these down and distribute them so the group can be praying throughout the week. Pray for the prayer requests shared, as well as:

- A deeper commitment to biblical community and the "one anothers" of Scripture.
- Courage to be vulnerable in sharing our needs and burdens with one another.
- Opportunities to use our gifts in service to the body and gospel witness to the world.
- Our church to increasingly reflect the love and unity described in Acts 2.

Close by thanking God for the gift of the church and the privilege of connecting as a spiritual family. Ask Him to continue to knit our hearts together and use our biblical community to draw others to saving faith in Jesus. Pray that Island Church would embrace that community is not just what we do, but who we are in Christ!