



Study Guide

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Next Chapter: *Growing*

Acts 2: 42-47

The Believers Form a Community

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper⁴³), and to prayer.⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.⁴⁶ They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved. (NLT)

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word.

1. Biblical community is not a new idea but rather a design created by God allowing us to flourish. Sharing our life and all the stories contained in that life requires courage and may be risky. We don't know who will accept us, who will reject us or who will simply tolerate us. But being known by others is the most effective way to grow spiritually.
 - Consider the Giant Sequoia tree, a tree that can live more than 3000 years in optimal conditions. But it will only survive and thrive if other Sequoia's are growing all around it. The trees provide protection from the elements and nutrition to one another, and their root system is connected. So, while the root system is shallow the connected roots create a strong support system as the trees grow together. We might call this a *community of trees*.
 - How do you think of community within the church called CFC?

3. We often look for the things that we have in common with others and avoid people who are not like us.
 - Why do we tend to gravitate toward others who seem in some way familiar to us?

When have you experienced an opportunity to get to know others who were different from you and discovered the richness of their culture, their way of life and their unique perspective and the joy that can be a byproduct of those experiences? How did this reshape your perspective?

4. The growth required in relationships will challenge us, there will be discomfort and frustration as we grow together and discover one another at a deeper level. The goal is to walk together toward becoming more like Jesus.
 - How does the process of deepening biblical friendship(s) over time, shape us into a more genuine and devoted Christ Follower?

- How are you living out a Christ like love for others within that community when differences arise? Where do you find common ground in those moments?

John 17:22-23 *I have given them the glory You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one— I in them and You in Me—that they may be perfectly united, so that the world may know that You sent Me and have loved them just as You have loved Me.*

Imagine God speaking this to you.

*I want you to know Me...I want you to know My story and I want you to know the stories of the people I have placed in your community. I want you to see where I have shown up...am showing up...and will be showing up for the rest of your life and theirs. Not just because of what I provide to you but as an invitation to invest yourself in MY story...to make a difference in our Kingdom. I (God) want you to grow and to engage with Me, to grow as you walk with Me, to grow as you work with Me. I want you to **choose** growth, even when it is hard, painful, or disruptive, so that you (and others) will experience all that I have planned for you in that process. I want you to experience community with Me and with them!*

MAKING IT REAL

- What is the greatest hurdle you face today in your willingness to be vulnerable and allow God to grow you?

- How will this teaching today move you into greater growth?