



FLOURISHING

Week of August 13 Connection in Community¹

Overview:

This sermon series will center around the idea of *flourishing* in our relationships with God, with others, and ourselves. When we live in *shalom* with one another, we also bring wholeness, peace, and reconciliation to our city and our world. The word *shalom* in the Hebrew bible carries this idea of flourishing – not just living “at peace” with one another but calling out the best in others through ethical economics, education centered on truth, physical health, and creative beauty. We are called to live in such a way that others are drawn into the abundant life that Jesus provides.

Group Objectives:

Relationships and Life Transformation are the primary purpose of community groups.

- Reflect on this past Sunday’s message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- Choose one practice that demonstrates “shalom seeking” with others in your group this week.

DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We Do Life Together*. Community is our middle name. Every person of every generation is wanted, needed, and known. And there’s always room for one more.

Conversation Starters:

- *Shalom* is sometimes used as a proper name. If you could pick any Biblical name, concept, or word to use as your proper name, what would it be and why?
- Share a special memory from this summer and why it was significant.
- What stood out to you from this week’s sermon?

Listening to God

- Where did you experience God last week? How were you able to join God on mission?

Learning from God’s Word: Bible Study Discussion

In Tim Keller's book *Generous Justice*, he describes *shalom* this way: “God created all things to be in a beautiful, harmonious, interdependent, knitted, webbed relationship to one another. Just as rightly related physical elements form a cosmos or a tapestry, so rightly related human beings form a community. This interwovenness is what the Bible calls *shalom*, or harmonious peace...

¹ This discussion guide was written by Jackie O’Dell and edited by Dawn Gentry.

[*Shalom*] means complete reconciliation, a state of the fullest flourishing in every dimension – physical, emotional, social, and spiritual – because all relationships are right, perfect, and filled with joy.”²

Read Acts 2:42 – 47

- How would you define *shalom*? Did your understanding of *shalom* change based on the sermon this week, or today’s study of scripture?
- How does this view of the early church challenge our thoughts on what church and community look like?
- What stands in the way of us living in community in this way?
- What is one thing you can do to create a “community of *shalom*,” in your group, church, family, or neighborhood?

Read Romans 12: 9 -10; 13-16

- What characteristics does Paul point out regarding our love for others?
- How do you translate these general characteristics into specific, concrete actions we can take?
- What other favorite Bible verses demonstrate practical ways to love others?
- Of the commands listed in these verses, which are the easiest for you and which are the most difficult?

Leaning into Obedience:

- How do you sense God calling you to respond to these passages?
 - Is there an example to follow? A command to obey?
- How can the group encourage you this week as you respond?
- Where is God calling you to reconcile, deepen or begin a relationship?

Prayer Prompts:

- Invite members of the group to share requests.
- Allow time for silent reflection on the following prompts.
 - Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal areas in your relationships that aren’t in *shalom*.
 - Pray that the Holy Spirit would give you his *shalom* to begin relating to these people with a spirit of *shalom*.
- This week how can you practice *shalom* and love with your family? Your church? Community Group? Co-workers?
- **Read Numbers 6: 24 – 26 as a closing blessing.**

For further study:

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*. (Harper One, 1954)
- Keller, Tim. *Generous Justice: How God’s Grace Makes Us Just*. (Penguin Books, 2016).
- Myers, Joseph R. *Organic Community: Creating a Place Where People Naturally Connect*. (Baker, 2007).
- To further your understanding of *Shalom*, watch <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/shalom-peace>.
- Review our CCC Discussion Guide on Community. Access it [here](#):

² Tim Keller, *Generous Justice*, 173-174.