



COMMUNITY

# PRACTICING *Jesus*

SERMON  
STUDY

10.06.2024

## Leader Corner

Practicing Jesus

Community

Acts 2:42-47

We desperately need community. Not just because life is better lived with others, but also because we are all still a work in progress. We need people who know us and who will allow themselves to be known by us. We need people who will demonstrate healthy love, care, forgiveness and correction in our lives, and we need to learn how to exemplify that for others. As Jesus invited, trained, and called his apprentices for ministry, he also helped them experience redeeming life together through community.

We think a healthy, mission minded community is a committed group of Jesus apprentices, empowered by the Holy Spirit, who devote themselves to train and participate in God's mission of redemption in a particular place and with a particular people.

Let's break this definition down for a moment:

*Committed group* = a number of people (friends, family, neighbors) devoted to each other

*Jesus apprentices* = growing in Jesus

*Empowered by the Holy Spirit* = formed and sent by the strength of the Holy Spirit

*Devoted to a particular place and people* = with a specific mission and focus for building life changing relationships.

In order to accomplish this mission, we truly need other people around us with this same mindset. This week we will learn or re-learn about authentic, apprentice minded community through the lens of the early church community.

**Main Idea:** Apprenticeship to Jesus happens best *with* other people.

**Main Practice:** Learn to listen, care for, and enjoy one another more.

**Main Teaching:** Acts 2:42-47

A few more housekeeping items for this week:

- **Pro Tip:** one of the best ways to experience life with each other is through sharing a meal. Plan to gather over food.
- Leave good space for the "with Practice" section and the "Practice" portion of your journal for this week.

### As You Begin Your Group Time:

Discuss last week's practice. How did your training go with any small or big intentional actions that illuminated the love of Jesus?

## Connect with Prayer

Have someone pray the following over the group:

*Jesus, you have called the church into being and have gathered us into one family. By the power of your Holy Spirit help us to live in unity and peace with all your people. May our actions this day be fruit of our faith in your kingdom. In the name of Jesus. Amen*

*(A Guide to Prayer for Ministers)*

## with Praise

As a group, sing or listen to the words of the song "Because of Christ." - The Belonging Co.

## with Principle

"We generally sin alone, but we heal together. . . because it's in relationships that we are formed and forged."  
(Practicing the Way, page 186)

1. Review any notes or takeaways from the "Learn" and "Listen" sections of your Practicing Jesus journal.
2. Have one person read Matthew 22:34-40 and then have another person read Acts 2:42-46.
  - a. Why do you think he summed up all of the ways to live into two commandments? Why these two?
  - b. How do the group of people mentioned in Acts 2 demonstrate the definition of an apprentice minded community?
  - c. When have you experienced similar acts of love and care from a devoted community? Are there any of these practices that might be a stretch for you?
  - d. After reading and discussing these two passages, what actions do you believe the Holy Spirit is leading you (or leading us as a community) to take?
3. There is a common union we share as apprentices of Jesus. It's His steadfast love and faithfulness to each of us. As a group, we encourage you to take communion together. Feel free to follow the prompts below, or to partake in a different way.
  - a. Read Matthew 26:26-29. Take some time to feel and sense the communion elements in your hands.
  - b. Then have someone read Romans 5:8 and take the bread together
  - c. Next, read 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 and take the juice together.
  - d. Finally, have someone pray over the group.

## with Practice

This week's practice is to learn to listen, care, and enjoy one another more. Being vulnerable and sharing parts of our stories is one way to deepen our understanding for one another. The following exercise will help your community practice listening and understanding:

**For your Group Time:** With each item, start by taking a minute or two to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the answer. Then have members share as they feel called to.

- A physical weakness. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a physical weakness you are dealing with. After each person shares, the group only responds out loud together with "Lord Jesus, help us."
- A relational weakness. (Broken friendship, marriage or family problem). Repeat the same experience, pause, pray, share, recite "Lord Jesus, help us."
- A character weakness. This can be the most vulnerable, but also essential for building trust and care.
  - Pause and pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal and show you something he likes about you.
  - Pause and pray again. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal a character weakness he wants you to share with the group.
  - Go around the circle and share what God enjoys about you and also something he

would like you to work on to change.

- After each person shares, everyone responds only with "Lord Jesus, help us."

### For your Training Time this week:

- Close your gathering by pairing up (smaller groups of 2 or 3), **share and pray** over what each person shared.
- **Write** in the "Practice" section of your journal.
- Then **commit to praying daily with each** other. Determine how you will connect daily

(from *The Other Half of the Church* - Wilder & Hendricks)

## For Further Study

Study the following passages: John 13:34-35, 1 John 1:7, Hebrews 10:24-25, Colossians 3:16, Galatians 6:2, James 5:16, Proverbs 27:17, Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, Romans 12;13, and 1 Peter 4:9.

### "Practicing the Way" reading plan.

- read pages 156-217 ("How" A Rule of Life" & "Take Up Your Cross")

### Other Resources

- *The Other Half of the Church*- Wilder & Hendricks