



Week One – Community [Leaders’ Guide]

In the Group On series we will look at the value of three different relational structures which should be a part of every Christians life. The goal of today’s discussion is to emphasize the value of belonging to the church and to especially value ENNYC and how God birthed this church. The following discussion will look at the value of Connect Groups and one on one relationships.

CONNECT

Choose one, or at most two of the Connect Questions. The goal is to get everyone involved in the conversation so choose the question you think the group will find the most engaging.

- Do you consider yourself a people person or a loner?
- What does community mean to you?
- Would you say your primary community is in your neighborhood, workplace, church, or friends?

WORD

This passage of scripture describes the very first church and the amazing community that they built. This church was started on the Day of Pentecost and is a model for every church to follow.

⁴²They 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. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Acts 2:42–47 (NIV)

THOUGHT

Talk with anyone who was in NYC in the aftermath of 9-11 and they will all recall the sense of community that swept through the city. People looked after each other and whatever needs there were in the community were taken care of by the community. People took the time to care for widows, orphans, the poor, anyone in need. And churches which had been in decline for decades across the city, suddenly found themselves filled with people seeking comfort, community, and deeper meaning. Church and Community are still important, but today, that strong sense of community so prevalent in NYC after 9-11, seems to have gradually weakened and disappeared and so have the crowds that filled city churches.

This might be a good time to tell the story of how ENNYC was started because in our birth were the seeds of who we were to become. You could ask anyone in your group who might know the story to go ahead and tell it. You could also tell the story at Discussion Question #5. Every Nation New York City's story is one of God's hope and redemption in the midst of pain and brokenness. Our congregation was birthed out of the 9-11 terrorist attacks, when, the day after the attacks, Senior Pastor Ron Lewis, Pastor Rice Brooks, and other EN leaders immediately rounded up some vans and RV's and loaded them with supplies and workers from Every Nation churches in the region and drove to New York City, arriving just a couple of days after 9/11 to minister to a city reeling from the devastation of that attack.

Driving into Manhattan, Pastor Ron was deeply moved when he saw the pillar of smoke that had once been the World Trade Towers. At that moment, he felt God clearly speak to him, "Out of these ashes I will build a great church." Sensing the urgency of the need, Pastor Ron & Pastor Rice began making immediate plans to birth this new congregation in New York.

Within a few weeks, Every Nation New York City held its first worship service in the historic Lamb's Theatre in Times Square. Today, MSNY is a diverse, multi-ethnic congregation meeting in several sites across the city and consisting of people from all kinds of backgrounds, career fields, and aspirations. We are committed to seeing God transform this city one life. We believe God placed us here to win the lost, heal the broken, and build community. You can use this story to make a number of different points as the Spirit guides the conversation – that we are a church that responds to the needs around us, that gets out of its comfort zone, that cares for the broken, that doesn't wait for everything to be perfectly aligned but responds in obedience when God calls, etc.

DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever been in need in one or more of these areas? Mark any that apply.

- Financial
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Physical
- Guidance

2. In what ways have you helped meet the needs of other people?

3. What are some things that you like to do to connect with people? Why?

A good 'follow on' question might be, which do you find most effective, and why?

Dinner

Entertainment

Serve

Church

4. What are the advantages of doing life together as opposed to doing life alone?

5. Every Nation New York City was birthed out of a response to the devastation of 9/11 to bring healing to a wounded city. What roles should the church play in the community?

The fundamental role the church plays is to show Jesus to the city in a way that will lead people into a relationship with him. This is why we show compassion, walk righteously, share hope, live generously, and encourage faith. Because these attributes are a reflection of our heavenly Father. Just as Jesus said, 'if you've seen me, you've seen the Father,' that should be our goal.

6. The passage we read in Acts 2 described the amazing community that the early church built. Which aspects of the early church community stand out to you?

7. What are some things that have discouraged you from being part of a church community?

8. The scripture says in Psalms 68:6, that 'God sets the lonely in families.' In what ways does God help us build community?

This is the 'gospel' question. If there are non-believers who are open, this question can naturally lead towards someone sharing a testimony of how God changed their life, changed their family, or changed their relationships. You might share how stronger relationships were made possible by your heart or life being healed of by Jesus.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

In this section the goal is to come up with measurable, action steps they can do during the coming week. You might also want to talk with some of the other leaders about possible group activities, especially community service opportunities.

- What is something you can do this week to get better connected to a church community?
- What can you do help strengthen your church community?
- What is one way that this group can serve the needs of the community around us?

PRAYER

Depending on how much time you have remaining, you might either have people pair up (might avoid this if there are new/non Christians). If you have a lot of time you can have everyone share a prayer request, or break into groups of 3 or 4.

- Pray for the church community.
- Pray for the needs of the people in your neighborhood, work place, school, family, and the nation.
- Ask God to show you ways to serve in your community.
- Pray for each other's personal needs.
- Pray for the nations

NOTES
