

# Reclaiming the Ordinary: Simple Rhythms for a Meaningful Life.

## Part 5: The Secret to Real Connection

Acts 2:42-47

**Summary:** Real transformation happens when we follow Jesus together.

### Main Ideas:

The weight of the division around us can be crushing.

We've created rhythms of isolation.

We reclaim unity by prioritizing a rhythm of community.

Faith grows by regularly acting it out with other people.

Real change happens when we follow Jesus together.

Following Jesus is more about a rhythm of practiced community than personal development.

We are committed to making our love stronger than our disagreements.

The world doesn't need perfect people, just ordinary people reclaiming ordinary lives... together.

**Invitation:** This week purposely practice a rhythm of community.

### Discussion Questions:

1. When you hear the word community, what comes to mind... positive or negative?
2. Have you ever pulled away from people because of disagreement or division? What happened?
3. Re-read Acts 2:42-47. What stands out to you about how the first Jesus Followers lived?
4. What's one "ordinary" way you could practice community this week... sharing a meal, praying with someone, or reaching out?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

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### Transcript:

**WE:** Have you ever skipped a family get-together... not because you're busy, but because that one person, the one you clash with, was going to be there?

Have you ever unfriended someone... just because a post made you realize you're on opposite sides?

Or had awkward moments when someone shares an opinion you wholeheartedly disagree with... and you make a mental note... That person is one of "them"... "Unsafe"

Maybe once vibrant relationships have grown cold or died altogether

The weight of the division around us can be crushing.

So we pull away.

- We trade deep conversations for short texts.
- Real connection for surface talk.

- And every time...we get a bit lonelier.

Instead of gathering around tables, we're scrolling in silence. Instead of sharing prayers or meals, we're protecting ourselves from disappointment... and losing more and more of what makes life worth living.

To protect ourselves... We've created rhythms of isolation.

Deep down, we ache for real connection and a community we can call home...

And that's what Jesus came to give the world.

A new kind of community...

- Not based on nationality, race, economic status, or political stances...
- But a community that can heal our divisions and pull us out of our rhythms of isolation.

A community based on his love...

**John 13:34-35 NLT** *So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.*

And, amazingly, his first followers took him seriously.

Instead of creating rhythms of isolation in a world that was very "other" than them...

- They created a rhythm of community.

And by looking at their example, we'll see... We reclaim unity by prioritizing a rhythm of community.

So let's see what it would look like, not in theory, but right here, right now, to take Jesus' words seriously.

What if the best thing we can do for the world is simply start purposely hanging out with each other?

**GOD: Acts 2:42-47 NLT** *All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—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.*

So the answer is to just live in a socialist commune?

- Yes. Pick up your white robe at the door on the way out.

No, but often that's how we read the bible, isn't it?

- They did this. It seems good, so we need to do it exactly like that.

There's a difference between the biblical writers describing something and prescribing something.

This passage is describing what the first church did, not prescribing what every church should do, no matter their context, location, or century.

So, Jesus Followers today are not required to copy the exact practices of Jesus Followers then, but we are called to embody the same commitments and spirit in our own context.

This passage tells us what the early church experienced, not necessarily a step-by-step blueprint for us—but it DOES show us the heart that should guide us.

So let's look at their rhythm here...

**Acts 2:42-43 NLT** *All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.*

We could go through each thing and piece it out, but for our discussion...

What do all of these things have in common?

- None of them happened while they were sitting alone in their houses watching their favorite gladiator team.

They prioritized being TOGETHER...

- They learned and discussed the same teachings.
- They hung out.
- They ate.
- And they prayed... together.

They realized faith grows by regularly acting it out with other people.

- We can't love each other like Jesus loved us if we aren't together
- We can't forgive each other if we don't know each other well enough to have a real conversation about how we've hurt each other.
- We can't support and encourage each other if we don't know what's going on in each other's lives.

Their faith wasn't just a "me and Jesus" thing.

- It wasn't just about what they believed in their individual heads,
- With a little bit of solo quiet bible reading in their room,
- Then going to a Jesus show once a week, shaking a few hands, getting a spiritual fill-up for the week.

The first Jesus Followers actually created a community... based on the love of Jesus.

And it affected their daily life and how they saw their place in the world. In some major ways...

**Acts 2:44-46 NLT** *And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—*

Isn't that crazy! Aren't you glad this is descriptive and not prescriptive?

Can you imagine? I know, some of you would love to sell everything and just go live off the grid... or build a compound with your family and friends... but this is A LOT!

- And for some, maybe you are supposed to do this

But here's the main heart here...

The first Jesus Followers were a visible, living, dynamic community. Actually and actively doing things together or for each other.

- They had a shared purpose they believed in.
- So much so, they were willing to sacrifice to make it happen.

Real change happens when we follow Jesus together.

See, this is why the idea of "My church is being alone in the woods with God" Doesn't actually work.

- First, it isn't grammatically correct. The church isn't a place/building, it's the group of people.
- But more importantly... while it's great to get away to enjoy God's creation, hear him without all the noise of our world...
- Jesus didn't come to earth and die and rise again just so we can have some private moments with him once in a while.
- He came to change the world through his love... specifically by his love shining through his people as they work, serve, and love together.

And this type of community requires a commitment to having a rhythm of being together.

And when that type of rhythm is prioritized, more and more people want to be a part of it... and God uses that unity to change lives and communities.

Look again at what happened...

**Acts 2:47** *...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.*

Their rhythm of community and purpose created joy, and everyone around them saw a difference.

- Instead of fear, they saw peace and generosity
- Instead of partisan division, they saw unity
- Instead of everyone looking out for #1 they saw a real loving community

And it made the people around them want that life too.

See, following Jesus is more about a rhythm of practiced community than personal development.

The first church wasn't perfect.

- They had a lot to work through, but they changed the world
- B/c they experienced a community formed by God's love that was accepting, generous, and transforming.

And that same kind of community, marked by Jesus' love, is still open to you and me today.

That's what Crosscreek exists to be.

- That's why our mission statement is... Inviting our neighbors to discover, enjoy, and share the life Jesus offers... TOGETHER.
- It's why our name is Crosscreek COMMUNITY Church.

You are invited to join a community based on the love of Jesus... no politics, race, or rules.

- Do we always agree? No. But we are committed to making our love stronger than our disagreements.
- Example: Luke and Monica discussing a hot-button issue with love and grace.

Maybe you're thinking of that one difficult relationship, or that moment you felt isolated.

- What could happen, not just in our church, but in your own ordinary life, if today you took just one step toward community?

When we remember who we are and whose we are... we can offer something no other community can.

- Belonging without conformity.

Does it require going to a church every week?

- No, but it does require other people.

**YOU:** Normally, this is where I give the pitch for you all to join small groups.

- And would say things like... Circles are better than rows.
- Which I believe is true.

But, b/c we are trying to create healthy rhythms, the leadership team has decided we are going to take some time off from official Crosscreek Connect Groups.

- 1st b/c the facilitators were also our leadership team who already do a lot of the heavy lifting here... not only were they facilitating, but with the exception of 1 group, they were also the hosts.
- Having to have their houses ready, whether people would show up or not.

I think small groups are amazing. I've made some really, really good friends through them.

But as I was writing this, I realized... do we really need the church organization to make this type of community for us?

- Why does it all have to be organized with specific leaders and frameworks?
- Having another TO DO on our weekly calendars?

- What if we took some time and trusted the Holy Spirit to lead us to people and groups that he needs us to be with right now?

So instead of doing a big push to get everyone to sign up for a group, I'm going to offer this invitation...

**This week: purposely practice a rhythm of community.**

- Invite someone for coffee or a meal.
- Pray with or for someone... send a text, make a call, or email.
- Stick around today. Meet someone new, share a snack, ask a real question."

Maybe something you try turns into a regular rhythm.

Maybe you even end up creating your own group...

- Discussion questions are provided each week.

Might take time to connect... people are like Lego pieces.

- Not trying to add more... but as we practice rhythm of rest and rethinking our priorities...
- Be open to adding a few more here and there.

When we purposely get together, we let God's love flow through us to each other.

- I can't do it all. You have to connect with each other, support each other, pray for each other, help each other.

**Following Jesus means following Jesus together.**

Now maybe your first step isn't just hanging out with someone, but accepting how much you're already loved and welcomed by Jesus.

- There are no prerequisites. Just a simple, honest step of telling Jesus you want to follow him and let him lead you as you walk with his community.
- Whoever you are, whatever you've done, you're invited.
- Just tell him... "Jesus, I want to follow you. I want to be part of your community."

**WE:** So, as we finish this series.

Can we just imagine together?

What would life be like if we really did this stuff?

What if we reclaimed our ordinary lives by practicing rhythms of savoring what God has given us, purposely resting, being connected to Jesus, giving our ordinary moments to him, and choosing to purposely follow him together?

Our lives really would change... stress, fear, anxiety, and anger would slowly dissolve.

We would find new joy in our regular days, and we would enjoy our families, friends more.

And there would be a difference in us and in our church that people would notice.

We would be in a position to allow God to love those around us through us.

We would be a bright light pointing to something better than what's offered around us.

Let's take a cue from the first Jesus Followers and take Jesus seriously.

You don't have to be perfect. Just willing... and together, that's how we start to see the change we are all longing for.

The world doesn't need perfect people, just ordinary people reclaiming ordinary lives... together.