

# Walking in Community

*Belonging, accountability, and “one another” life*

**LISTEN & WATCH** [www.BTLdiscipleship.guide/community](http://www.BTLdiscipleship.guide/community) [QR code]

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| <b>BIG IDEA</b>     | Jesus forms a family, not freelancers. We can't follow Him alone, and we were never meant to.                                                                                                                        |
| <b>MEMORY VERSE</b> | <i>“A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”</i> <b>John 13:34-35</b> |
| <b>ACTION STEP</b>  | <b>Commit to one ongoing Christian gathering for the next 8-12 weeks, and sign up (or show up) this week.</b>                                                                                                        |
| <b>OUTCOME</b>      | I'm connected to an ongoing gathering and practicing “one another” love.                                                                                                                                             |

## The Way of Jesus Read before you meet • about 5 minutes

### A family, not freelancers

Jesus called His disciples by name, ate with them, traveled with them, sent them out two by two, and restored them when they failed. The first Christians “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

The New Testament is full of “one another” commands: love one another, encourage one another, carry one another’s burdens, forgive one another. You can’t obey them alone. Isolation stunts growth. Belonging speeds it up.

### Love is Jesus’ plan to reach the world

Jesus said the world would recognize His disciples by one thing: our love for one another. Community isn’t a side benefit of faith. It’s where Scripture becomes visible: encouragement, correction, burden-bearing, and unity. Colonial’s hope to be *Better Together* and a *Safe Harbor* becomes real in small, ordinary acts: learning a name, making an introduction, carrying a burden, helping someone belong.

### Love listens

One of the simplest ways to love someone is to listen well. Kent Mathews points out that while someone is talking, most of us are busy planning what we’ll say next, how they’re wrong, or a story of our own. Real listening sounds different:

- **Pay attention.** Put the phone away. Lean in. Nod.
- **Validate.** Before you fix, correct, or advise, show you understand: “That sounds really hard.” You don’t have to agree in order to empathize.
- **Clarify.** Ask, “Am I hearing you right?” before you respond.

Kent pictures a conversation like a small sailboat. When someone leans hard to one side, don't lunge to the opposite side. Move toward them, at least to the middle, so you can stay in the boat together.

### From audience to family

It's possible to attend church for years and never be known. The shift happens when we stop asking, "What will I get?" and start asking, "How can I contribute?"

## When You Meet *about 60 minutes*

**Who leads:** The disciple opens in prayer, leads Connect, and leads Read. The discipler leads Practice and Pray & Plan.

### Connect • 10 min

- **Listening exercise.** Sit facing each other. One person shares their highest high and lowest low of the past week. The listener may only nod and say things like "yeah," "mm-hmm," or "wow." Then switch.
- Talk about it: How did it feel to be listened to that way? How did your generosity step go?

### Read • 20–25 min

**Read aloud:** Acts 2:42–47, Hebrews 10:24–25, and Galatians 6:1–2

1. List what the first church devoted themselves to. Which one do you most need right now?
2. Hebrews says to "spur one another on." Who spurs you on? Whom do you spur on?
3. Who knows your joys, sins, and fears by name? If no one does, what's one step toward that?
4. Where are you tempted to "go it alone"?

### Practice • 15 min

- **Choose your gathering.** Look together at options for ongoing community: a small group, a Sunday class, a serving team, Alpha, a men's or women's study, or a support group. Each choose one and decide when you'll sign up.
- **Choose one "one another"** to practice this week: encourage, pray for, carry a burden, forgive, or welcome.

### Pray & Plan • 10 min

- Pray for each other's step into community.
- Confirm your gathering and your "one another."

**For disciplers:** If you can, go with your disciple to their first visit to a new group or serving team. Walking in the door is the hardest part.

**For groups:** This is a good week to ask: What's next for our group? Consider continuing together, or multiplying into new groups.

## Live It This week's action step

**Commit to one ongoing Christian gathering for the next 8–12 weeks, and sign up (or show up) this week.**

My gathering \_\_\_\_\_

I'll sign up or attend by \_\_\_\_\_

**Go deeper (optional):** Plan a hospitality night this month. Invite someone from church and someone from your BLESS list to the same table.

## Pass It On within 48 hours

Practice one “one another” this week: send an encouraging note, carry someone’s burden, or share a meal.

## Five Days with Jesus 10–15 minutes a day

Use **R<sup>3</sup>** each day: Read, Reflect, Respond.

☐ **Day 1 • Acts 2:42–47**

Which devotion of the first church will I imitate this week?

☐ **Day 2 • Hebrews 10:24–25**

Who can I spur on today?

☐ **Day 3 • Galatians 6:1–5**

Where is gentle restoration needed, in me or in someone else?

☐ **Day 4 • Ephesians 4:1–3**

How will I make every effort for unity today?

☐ **Day 5 • Romans 12:9–13**

Plan one act of sincere love and hospitality.

## Awareness: From Audience to Family

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Every time you walk into church, a group, or a meal, ask, *“How can I contribute to the body today?”* instead of *“What will I get?”* Look for the person standing alone.

## Ready to Move On?

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- ☐ I’m connected to one ongoing gathering.
- ☐ I’m practicing one “one another” habit each week.
- ☐ I’ve shared a meal or unhurried time with someone.

*When you and your discipler agree these are true, move on to the next session. If not, take another week. That’s growth too.*

# Sources & Acknowledgment

## The original pathway

This booklet adapts and substantially rewrites material from *Discipleship Pathway* (2024) by Rev. Megan Koch and Rev. Phil Wiseman of Table Church in Des Moines, Iowa, used with the authors' blessing. The original identifies its license as Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

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## The Colonial adaptation

Prepared for Colonial Presbyterian Church by Pastor Jeff Sparks for the Be the L.I.G.H.T. Discipleship Pathway. This adaptation keeps the original ten lesson themes; adds a Launch session with a gospel foundation and a Commissioning session with a multiplication plan; restructures each lesson around a weekly meeting, one action step, and a five-day reading plan; and draws on Colonial's *Be the LIGHT Abide Guide* (P.R.A.Y., R<sup>3</sup>, BLESS, and the Abide Plan), earlier micro-course drafts, and Kent Mathews' evangelism training at Colonial (listening, validating, clarifying, and "know, tell, do, and be the story").

## Also informed by

Zúme Training (the Model, Assist, Watch, Leave pattern and the emphasis on obeying and sharing between sessions); *Rooted* by Mariners Church (short daily readings and shared experiences); and *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer (one practice at a time, and a rule of life).

## Quotations

John Mark Comer, *Live No Lies* (2021). Dallas Willard, on "pitching its message too low." Henri Nouwen, on downward mobility. Robert Louis Stevenson (attributed), on seeds and harvest. The *Didache* (early Christian teaching, 1st–2nd century), on weekly fasting.

## Scripture

Scripture quotations are from the Berean Standard Bible (BSB), which is in the public domain. Read the full passages in any trustworthy translation or audio Bible.

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