



OPENING QUESTIONS

Describe a time when community helped pick you up out of a hard time. What was going on in life then? What did this community or person do to help?

BIG IDEA

We are better off together.

READ TOGETHER

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and **Ephesians 4:11-12, 16**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the reasons why we sometimes keep people at arm's length.
 - Have there been seasons of life where you kept others at arm's length? What were the motivating factors of doing this?
- 2) What are some choices, steps or changes of thinking that have helped you take a step into authentic and honest relationships and community?
 - Take a minute to pray as a group for those at RPC and those in your spheres of influence. Pray that God would enable them to be bold and take a step into community; to invite others into their life.
- 3) CS Lewis - "Friendship is born at the moment when one man says to another "what you too? I thought that no one but myself..."
 - Describe one person in your life (either presently or past) who you felt you could talk to about anything; the person who you felt you could be most honest and most authentic with.
 - What was it about this person and this relationship that enabled it to be like that? What were the qualities/attributes/foundation that made that person/relationship open and safe?
- 4) Think about your group. How can we take a step towards authentic life relationships as a group? What are some practical things that will help us move in this direction?
 - Erik asked us all to consider this... "What do you love to do?" What are some creative, innovate, possible crazy things that our group would love to do together to grow our friendships?
- 5) Erik challenged us to consider opening our group to others, because there are many who are not connected. Is there anything we need to adjust or re-think to ensure our small group is outward looking, open and accessible to those who need community?
 - Pray that God would help you cross paths with someone who needs to get connected; who you can invite into your community, or invite for lunch, etc.

PRAYER

Take some time individually to silently pray and ask God about the following. Write down anything He lays on your heart.

- Lord, how can I be increasingly intentional in the area of community and relationships?
- Lord, highlight in my life any ways or areas you are asking me to be more authentic or vulnerable in. Who are you calling me to be authentic and vulnerable with?
- Lord, how, where and to whom, can I show authentic love and an expression of belonging, inclusion and community? How can I be more outward focused to those who are unconnected?

NEXT STEPS

Whatever it is God said to you or your group – be obedient to that. Take steps this week and when you gather together again, discuss what happened and how it went!