

## WATER Lesson 3: Community Offers Fellowship



**Q: How willing are you to schedule your time so that you can spend time with people from church? How much time are you willing to sacrifice?** The focus of this question isn't so much an amount of time, but a discussion about the hobbies and habits that soak up our lives. Television, recreation, video games, surfing the internet, Facebook, etc. Where in our lives is there opportunity to make more room for other people? How can you find and protect some time to invest into intentional relationships? We have time for the things that we make a priority in our lives. People matter to God and they should matter to us.

**Q: Read James 1:21. Do you have any unhealthy behaviors, thoughts, or addictions that are keeping you from moving forward in your faith? What group might be best for you to consider?** This is probably a rhetorical question and not an appropriate place to discuss our dirty laundry, but it is also an opportunity for you to push your group members to get connected to a group where then can overcome and move forward. Many people who come to church are hurting and they need other Christians to build them up and to guide them. The church offers many different uplifting groups that meet people where they are at. Try to get these people to connect to a group if possible.

**Q: Have you ever been in a Community Group? If so, what are the greatest parts of being in a group that keep you coming back? Read and discuss Hebrews 10:24-25.** Most people will be reading this question in a discussion group, so we are probably preaching to the choir. Our goal is to instill the value of being connected to an ongoing group where you can establish relationships built upon trust so that you can find encouragement in your times of need. We should actively be seeking ways to encourage one another, looking out for the best interest of others. We gather together because when we live in close proximity relationally it is an opportunity to show love to one another.

**Q: What is it about doing something with other people that bonds you together? Can you think of an example of an experience you had with a group of people you now consider to be your friends?** Common experiences draw us together because we permanently enter into a memory that we share. It can never be taken away from us. The more memories we share, the more our lives become interwoven and connected to one another. We take a part of our loved ones with us everywhere we go. This is true for our family, and it is also true with our friends.

**Q: Describe the perfect fellowship group for your interests. Do you think that it would be possible to form an actual group like this? Does one exist?** So there are some things that make us unique, but there are many things that make us not so different from everyone else. When you find a person or a group of people that share some common interests, it puts a spark in your spirit and affirms your inherent value. It's not always easy to find such a group, so pray that God would help you to identify some people that could help you to become all that God desires for you to be.

**Q: How do fellowship groups help people to grow in their faith?** Fellowship groups don't typically study the Bible or dig into theology, but they do build us up by affirming our value. When we get together we are saying, "You are worthy of my time" or "I enjoy spending time with you." We are created with a need to be loved, and when we are isolated from fellowship, we may feel lonely, depressed, and unvalued. In a fellowship group, we allow our true selves to come out and people may see the good, the bad, and the ugly, and then they will be able to affirm and correct our character in brotherly love.

**Q: Read Proverbs 18:24. What makes a good friend? How does one go about finding good friends?** A good friend can be trusted. A good friend will tell you the truth. A good friend cares about the details of your life. A good friend will make personal sacrifices to show you love. A good friend will want to spend time with you. A good friend will rejoice and celebrate with you and will grieve and mourn with you in sadness. Good friends are truly a treasure and for many they hard to come by. The best place to start making friends is by being a good friend to others.

**Q: If God is our strength, why do we need other people? Is it okay to not have friends?** In theory, God is all we need, but He has given us life and placed us upon this earth for a purpose. He wants to use us to show people His love and He uses people to remind us that we too are loved by Him. This fulfills a need within our hearts that was put there by God. It's okay not to have lots of friends, but we all need someone that we can count on. We are created to need others who will show us love and value us for who we are.

**Q: What are the benefits and hindrances of social media and relationships over the internet?** Social media takes away a natural filter that we have when we are communicating face to face. People are more inclined to be critical or hurtful when they engage in social media relationships because they cannot see how their words affect another person. Eye contact, body language, facial expression is all lost and the depth of the conversation is hindered. This isn't to say that social media relationships have no value at all, but they cannot replace a face-to-face relationship; there's nothing like it!

**Q: What are some ideas about how we can develop deeper relationships within this group?** Plan a BBQ. Do a work project together. Work on an outreach idea together. Serve at the men's shelter or a soup kitchen. Volunteer together at a local event. Clean up a park. Have a game night. Go out for coffee or a meal together. Have a fellowship night where you just get together and talk...

**Class Assignment:** Have you given any more thought to whom God might want you to connect with to help you grow in your faith? If you have a close friend already, consider writing them a note this week to tell them why you value the relationship that you have with them and why you appreciate them so much. If you are still looking to establish a friendship with someone, get a name or two in your mind and make a phone call this week to get together. You might also consider a letter to express why you appreciate a person and invite them to talk some more when you get together.

#### **Memory Verse:**

**1 Corinthians 12:25-27** - *"there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."*

#### **PRAYER REQUESTS:**