SMALL GROUP GUIDE **NOV 1, 2026**

A New Community

The first church in Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection and ascension didn't begin with a building, a budget, or a program. It began with simple people who had been changed by the risen Jesus – the first fruits of New Creation – and who now shared their lives in ways that made no sense to the watching world. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer." They held their possessions loosely, met daily, and opened their homes and their tables to one another. Our culture tells us faith is private, belonging is optional, and commitment lasts only as long as it's convenient. "The Acts of the Apostles" Chapter 2 tells a different story. To live as a Christian has always been a counter-cultural act, and it begins with a community that belongs to Jesus and to one another.

- Think of a place where you've felt you truly belonged, such as a team, a family table, or a group of friends. Share it. What made that belonging real?

- Read Acts 2:42–47. Does anything stand out to you about the way these first believers lived together? What surprises you or challenges you?

- Luke names four things the church "devoted themselves to": teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. Why do you think these four practices came first? What do you think the word devoted suggests about how they held them?

- The passage ends with this: "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Discuss the possible connection between the church's countercultural style of living and the new people being drawn to explore and join it.

- Where has our culture's emphasis on independence, privacy, personal preference, or convenience shaped the way you think about the Church? In what ways do you relate to the Church more as a consumer than as a member of a family?

- Which part of Acts 2:42–47 feels most foreign to your life right now: shared meals, open homes, generosity, daily connection, or devotion to prayer? What would it look like for you, or for this group, to take one small step toward it?

Prayer

Read aloud together:
Father, thank You for not leaving us to follow You alone.
You have made us a family by Your Spirit,
bound together by the blood of Your Son.
Forgive us for the ways we have kept each other at arm's length,
for guarding our time, our homes, and our hearts
when You have asked us to share them.
Forgive us for treating Your church as something we attend
instead of a people we belong to.
Make us devoted the way the first believers were devoted:
to Your Word, to one another, to the table, and to prayer.
Open our doors and soften our schedules.
Give us glad and sincere hearts.
Let our life together be so marked by Your love
that the people around us would wonder where it comes from,
and find their way to You.
In Jesus' name, amen.

Practice

The first believers "broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts." For them, the table was where community happened. In a culture of drive-thru, screens, and full calendars, an unhurried shared meal has become a quietly counter-cultural act.

This week, set aside 5 minutes and ask:

- Who do I actually share my life with, beyond schedules and small talk?
- When did I last share a meal with someone from my church outside of a scheduled event?
- What gets in the way of an open home or an open table for me: time, pride, fear, comfort, or something else?
- Who is one person, or one household, God may be inviting me to make room for?

Then we want to challenge you to do it. Not necessarily the meal itself just yet, but the invitation – the spot taken up on the calendar. Invite someone from your group, church, or neighborhood to share a meal, whether it's just a coffee, a casual dinner, or soup on a weeknight. Keep it simple and don't worry about impressing anyone. Be sure to share with your group what happened and how it went afterward.