

“(un)common”

week #2

INTRODUCTION

Last week we began our study of the early believers changed by the Holy Spirit. Those early believers had an uncommon fellowship that we seldom find today. They devoted themselves to fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer. They shared their meals and they shared their lives with one another. During those times, they developed close relationships, allowing themselves to be authentic and transparent. These are the kinds of friendships that allow us to admit we are hurting, scared or overwhelmed. It is where it is ok not to be ok. It is in relationships like these we find a unique opportunity for healing. This study considers how we can foster those kinds of relationships and healing.

Ice Breaker (Optional):

When was the last time you joined a close friend for a meal?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Hiding in darkness

Q1. Read John 16:33 John 3:19; John 8:12

The dark times of life, the tribulations or the times we stumble, will happen to all of us. (John 16:33) But God did not create us to dwell in darkness. What is one reason people choose to stay in darkness (John 3:19)? We may all stumble, but we can't allow sin to isolate us by hiding from those who care about us. What did Jesus offer to those who were walking in darkness? What are some of the most common things you have seen that drive people into hiding? (e.g. overwhelmed, shame, pride...) What are some cues you can watch for that indicate that you, or someone else, is pulling away?

Ignoring the problem

Q2. Read Luke 15:13-16; 1 Peter 4:12-13

The Bible provides us examples of people who were “not ok”. In Luke 15 the prodigal son made his share of mistakes, but didn't immediately change his direction. What were the sad consequences when his overwhelming circumstances turned into an overwhelmed life? What are some of the negative consequences we experience when we let our lives become overwhelming? When we think our lives will be void of trouble we might question God. Peter assures us these things will happen, but what encouragement does he give us? The good news is Jesus has

overcome the world (John 16:33) and loves us enough to die for us (John 3:16).

How should we respond?

Q3. Read James 5:13-16; Matthew 11:28

God has provided us a place to experience healing, and that involves community. In James chapter 5, what role does the community of believers play in the healing? In these verses the word for sick¹ means to be weak, feeble, to be without strength, powerless. This goes beyond physical illness and describes what can be mental, emotional or spiritual “sickness” as well. Similarly the Greek word for heal (Sozo) can also be translated to make whole, and means to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction. Within the community of believers we may be on the giving or receiving end this healing. Share with your group a time that you have witnessed this kind of “healing” in the life of a brother or sister. Take time to discuss with your group how to grow the depth of your relationships so that you will care for on another in a way that brings healing to those who are “not ok”.

¹*astheneō*

Wrap-Up

It is ok for us not to be ok, but it is not ok for us to stay that way. Many times we face overwhelming circumstances in our lives. But the church, that is the fellowship of believers, should be a place where hurting people can come to be restored. Ignoring or hiding our pain, worry, and anxiety will only lead to destructive consequences. As the community of faith, we can be an extension of forgiveness and healing that Jesus offers to all.

Memory Verse

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:28 NIV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:

Challenge: *If there is a burden weighing you down, find a trusted brother or sister in Christ to share with and pray together for healing. Conversely, is there someone who needs you to listen to and pray with them?*

