



Together by Grace: The Beauty of Small Groups in the New Covenant

Isaac Dailey, Executive Pastor
Valley Church

February 15 & 18, 2024

Acts 2:42-47

The Big Idea:

Remember the early Christians. They didn't have church buildings or fancy sound systems. What they had was each other, homes where they could gather, share meals, and talk about what Jesus was doing in their lives. This simple, yet profound gathering, is what we call small groups or life groups today. And it's all wrapped up in the amazing grace God pours out through the New Covenant.

Key Points:

1. Grace in the _____ Room - We see a beautiful depiction of the early church where believers gathered together in homes to share life, grow in faith, and support one another. Acts 2:42-47 illustrates a profound sense of community and fellowship that was rooted in the teachings of the apostles and centered around the person of Jesus Christ.

2. The Heart of the New Covenant: Grace _____ - In Jeremiah 31:33, we find a profound promise from God about the New Covenant: He pledges to inscribe His teachings directly onto our hearts. This act represents the essence of grace: God doesn't just visit our lives; He makes His home within us, transforming our innermost beings with His love and truth. This divine renovation signifies our adoption into God's vast, diverse family, where isolation is replaced by a vibrant network of relationships.

3. Cultivating _____ in the Soil of Grace - Small groups stand as fertile ground where the seeds of faith can sprout and flourish, nurtured by the rich soil of grace. This communal garden thrives on three foundational practices: accountability, discipleship, and service, each watered with grace and sunlight from Scripture.

4. Embracing _____, Embracing Grace: A Journey to _____ Community - Entering into a small group does indeed require courage and commitment. It's a step that might seem daunting amidst our already packed schedules and the myriad of responsibilities vying for our attention. Yet, Scripture invites us to view this step not as an addition to our burden but as a pathway to deeper connection with Christ and His body, the church.

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Personal Life:

1. Reflecting on the scenario described in the introduction, what aspects stood out to you as key elements of a small group gathering rooted in grace? How do you envision grace being expressed in your own small group experiences or in ideal gatherings? How has being part of a small group impacted you personally?

Ponderings:

2. Acts 2:42-47 paints a vivid picture of the early church's communal life. What practices mentioned in this passage do you think are most vital for fostering authentic Christian community today? How can we ensure that these practices remain central in our modern-day small groups?

3. Jeremiah 31:33 speaks of God's promise to write His teachings on our hearts in the New Covenant. How does this promise shape our understanding of grace within the context of small groups? How can we encourage each other to lean into this promise in our daily lives?

4. Reflect on Hebrews 10:24-25, which urges believers not to neglect gathering together but to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. How can we practically apply this exhortation in our small group dynamics? Share ideas for fostering a culture of encouragement and support within your group.

5. The sermon emphasizes the importance of grace as the foundation of small group gatherings. How can we intentionally cultivate an environment of grace within our small groups, especially when faced with conflicts or differences among members?

6. The concept of accountability within the New Covenant framework emphasizes transformation and mutual encouragement rather than judgment or condemnation. How do you personally define accountability within the context of grace? Share an example of how grace-based accountability has impacted your spiritual journey.

Promptings:

7. Discuss the challenges mentioned in the sermon regarding vulnerability, commitment, and service within small groups. Which of these challenges resonate with you the most, and why? How can we overcome these challenges together as a community?

8. In closing, the sermon encourages listeners to take action in joining or hosting small groups. What steps can you personally take to engage more deeply with small group life? How can you encourage others to participate in this aspect of community?