

Welcome Week

Learning

- You will want to give some orienting direction for your house church. It may be simple, “following along with the book of Acts” or it may be more open-ended as you are inviting everyone in the group to help shape it week in and week out.

Dialogue about Discipleship & “House Church” (content for prep and/or to use as a group)

Orienting Ideas

- The Gospels present Jesus as the culminating revelation of who God is and who we are as human beings. This two way revelation is all about God’s process of atonement, adoption, and liberation as *Gospel Identity* sinks in for all of us. Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection makes a way and invites us to a process of discipleship under him: *to be with him, become like him, and do what he did.*
- Discipleship is primary and the emergence of “the church” is just the collateral effect of groups of people responding to this good news of *Gospel Identity*. The church is thus, primarily, a people who are trying to work out the implications of this Gospel identity in their normal lives. The church is not the forms, events, gatherings, denominations, or buildings.
- This process of Discipleship involves every aspect of our personhood and lives. At times, it will have aspects that are very structured, linear, and predictable; other parts will be organic, cyclical, and unpredictably messy. Both of these parts require our participation, intentionality, and risk (nobody accidentally or casually follows Jesus)!
- Gathering with a community as a “church” is just one “predictable” structure of the broader and deeper process of discipleship. The gathering space is a primer for all of life. It is a place for things like connection, support, realignment, clarifying, receiving, giving, challenging, and changing. Ultimately, the hope is growth and multiplication as the inward journey pushes outward on mission.

Profound Quote to Engage

- Reflect on the tension and messiness we all bring to community:
“*Let him who cannot be alone beware of community.* He will only do harm to himself and the community. Alone you stood before God when he called you; alone you had to answer that call; alone you had to struggle and pray; and alone you will give an account to God. You cannot escape from yourself; for God has singled you out. If you refuse to be alone you are rejecting Christ’s call to you, and you can have no part in the community of those who are called... But the reverse is also true: *Let him who is not in community beware of being alone.* Into the community you were called, the call was not meant for you alone; in the community of the called you bear your cross, you struggle, you pray. You are not alone, even in death, and on the Last Day you will be only one member of the great congregation of Jesus Christ... We recognize, then, that only as we are within the fellowship can we be alone, and only he that is alone can live in the fellowship... Both begin at the same time.”
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (pgs. 77-78)

Dialogue Questions (some example questions for this content above, give space for reflection)

- What do you think about these statements about discipleship and church? What might you challenge, or add?
- What are you learning from Dietrich’s quote? What guidance does it give to your house church community?

Implication Questions (some example questions/challenges that engage real life now)

- Can you name the season of discipleship you are in? How are you responding to that season? What are you being intentional about in your practices? (e.g Rule of Life!)
- Are you bringing any needs or expectations to this community in this season? Are you sensing any direction for this community? Are there any practices you want to commit to together (beyond gathering weekly) as a house church?
- Invitation to everyone to explore a fresh *Rule of Life* for this season ([Link here](#))