

Around THE TABLE



Normal Campus Sermon Study - 8.23.2026

Leader's Corner

The Table

Acts 2:42-47

Main Idea: Following Jesus is deeply personal, but it was never meant to be private. Jesus forms us through a community where we are seen, safe, shaped, and sent.

Primary Passage: Acts 2:42-47

Leader Emphasis: This study is more than a pitch for joining a group. The goal is to help people imagine and pursue the kind of relationships we see in Acts 2: people devoted to Jesus and to one another. For someone disconnected, the invitation may be to pull up a chair. For someone already in a group, the challenge may be to move beyond simply attending and become more known, more vulnerable, more invested, and more outward-focused.

Big Question: Who knows you—and who are you intentionally knowing, loving, and helping follow Jesus?

Prayer and Praise

Begin by thanking God that He does not invite us to follow Jesus alone.

Invite the group to name something they are grateful for about Christian community—a person who has encouraged them, prayed for them, shown up for them, challenged them, or simply made room for them.

Then pray: Jesus, thank You for inviting us into Your family. Give us the courage to be known, the grace to know one another well, and the willingness to become the kind of people who make room for others. Form us into a community that reflects Your love. Amen.

Group Discussion

1. **PULL UP A CHAIR:** When you hear the word community, what comes to mind first—something you want, something you already enjoy, something difficult, or maybe a little of all three? Follow-up: What makes meaningful community so appealing—and what can make it difficult?
2. **DEVOTED, NOT JUST INTERESTED:** Read Acts 2:42–47 together. Verse 42 says the believers “devoted themselves” to teaching, fellowship, meals, and prayer. What stands out to you about the word devoted? How is being devoted to community different from simply attending something when it fits your schedule?
3. **YOU CAN’T “ONE ANOTHER” WITHOUT ANOTHER:** The New Testament repeatedly tells us to love one another, encourage one another, forgive one another, pray for one another, carry one another’s burdens, and build one another up. What parts of following Jesus become difficult—or even impossible—when we try to follow Him mostly by ourselves? Where have you personally experienced someone else helping you follow Jesus better?
4. **SEEN — “SOMEONE KNOWS MY NAME AND MY STORY.”** Acts 2:44–45 shows people recognizing needs and responding to them. What has to be true relationally before somebody can really know what you need? Then consider this line from the message: To be cared for, you have to be known. What makes allowing ourselves to be known difficult?
5. **SAFE — “I CAN BE HONEST HERE.”** Most of us are pretty good at giving the “I’m doing fine” answer. What creates the kind of community where someone can eventually say, “Actually, I’m struggling,” without fearing judgment or rejection? What destroys that kind of safety?
6. **SHAPED — “THESE PEOPLE HELP ME BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS.”** Biblical community is more than finding people we enjoy being around. How have relationships with other Christians challenged, encouraged, corrected, or shaped you into becoming more like Jesus? What is the difference between a group that is merely comfortable together and a group that is actually being formed together?
7. **ROWS + TABLES —** The early believers gathered both in the Temple and in homes. The sermon described this as Rows + Tables. What can happen in the larger church gathering that is difficult to experience anywhere else? And what can happen around a smaller table that simply cannot happen very well in a crowd? Where do you currently feel stronger—rows or tables?
8. **SENT — “COMMUNITY ISN’T JUST ABOUT ME.”** Acts 2 ends with people being added to their community, and Jesus says in John 13:35 that our love for one another shows the world something about Him. How could the way a group loves one another actually become a witness to people outside the group? Where might God be asking your group to extend the table this fall—through invitation, serving, hospitality, generosity, or care?
9. **THE MESSINESS OF COMMUNITY —** Real community sounds beautiful in Acts 2, but anyone who has lived in it long enough knows it can also be inconvenient, disappointing, and messy. What usually tempts us to pull away from community when relationships become difficult? What does it look like to walk through the messiness rather than around it?
10. **NOT EVERYBODY. BUT SOMEBODY.** Consider this statement from the sermon: “Not everybody needs to know everything about you. But somebody should know what’s really going on with you.” Who are your somebodies right now? And if you don’t have them yet, what might be one courageous step toward finding them?

Practice

Around the Table:

This week, choose one movement toward deeper community:

BE KNOWN — Tell someone you trust something real that you would normally keep to yourself.

KNOW SOMEONE — Ask someone a question beyond “How are you?” and really listen.

SHOW UP — Encourage, pray for, help, celebrate, or carry a burden for someone in your community.

MAKE ROOM — Invite someone toward your table who may currently feel unseen or disconnected.

For groups, finish the night by answering:

Who could we intentionally make room for this fall?

And: What is one way we could serve together and extend our table beyond ourselves?

Further Study

1 Thessalonians 2:8 — What does it mean to share not only the Gospel but “our own lives” with people?

Hebrews 10:24–25 — Why does gathering together matter for encouraging and forming one another?

Galatians 6:2 — What does carrying another person’s burden require relationally?

John 13:34–35 — According to Jesus, what makes Christian community missional?

Romans 12:9–18 — Read slowly and identify every description of life with other people. Which one comes naturally to you? Which one might Jesus be asking you to grow in?

If you want to land the entire study around the “There’s a Seat for You” theme, I’d finish with:

What would change in your life if you stopped simply attending community and truly devoted yourself to being known, knowing others, and following Jesus together?

That feels like the question that puts Acts 2, Seen / Safe / Shaped / Sent, and the whole table metaphor into one place.