

## Next Steps, Week 4

### “Who do I do this with?”

### Connected Believers Gain a Family

God had a vision of an earthly family that would be fruitful relationally, grow numerically, and live purposefully to bring about God’s kingdom on the earth. “*be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it*” (Genesis 1:28 NLT).

#### 1. First and Foremost, Made for God

God made Adam and Eve for His own pleasure and glory. Adam and Eve became not only physical beings, but spiritual ones connected to the Creator.

#### 2. Made for Others

God calls believers to grow in relationship with others and become the family He envisioned. Family, God’s way, is people doing life together in open, honest, and vulnerable relationships.

#### 3. Awareness of Humankind’s Need

Adam was alone in the beautiful, magnificent garden that God created (Genesis 2:18). Loneliness is not an indicator that a person is broken, and feeling lonely is not a sin. Much like hunger pangs indicate a need for food, loneliness is an awareness of the need for relationships.

#### 4. In a Crowd Yet Isolated

Believers can have a relationship with God, sit in a church pew on Sundays, but still be going through life virtually alone. Sitting in pews with other people at best provides casual, safe relationships; however, gathering in circles gives the opportunity to dialogue with others and share from the heart.

#### 5. Created for So Much More

Human beings were created for so much more than cordial greetings, surface-level conversations, and casual relationships. When something is missing in relationships at

church or life in general, it usually stems from a yearning deep within the human core for deeper connections.

## **Connected Believers Have an Opportunity to Grow**

### 1. Real Growth Requires the Right Kinds of Relationships

Believers have been created anew in Jesus to do many good things. *“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago”* (Ephesians 2:10 NLT).

### 2. A Desire for Growth and a Sense of Greatness

God’s plan for a believer’s growth requires frequently gathering with other people. *“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near”* (Hebrews 10:24–25 NLT).

## **Connected Believers Are Transformed**

### 1. Nobody Heals Alone

Transformation happens in the context of relationships because nobody heals alone. *“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results”* (James 5:1 NLT).

### 2. Allowing Souls to Prosper

Souls are healed and prosper when believers confess sin to God and to one another, and pray for each other. *“People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they receive mercy”* (Proverbs 28:13 NLT).

## **Connected Believers Make a Difference**

*“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples”* (John 13:34–35 NLT).

Wherever believers are found, the church's purpose remains the same: to make disciples and help people follow Jesus. Here are some helpful tips for bringing others to new life in Christ.

- First, *go and tell!*
- Second, invite other to *come and see!*

### ***Bring Others to Closer Relationships***

Bringing others to closer relationships in the body of Christ can be as simple as extending an invitation to a B-Group or a gathering of friends.

### ***Bring Others to Live on Purpose***

New believers should be encouraged to follow the example set by Christ and serve in some aspect of ministry where leadership skills are discovered and can be developed.

## **Connected Believers Receive Care and Give Care**

### **1. The Solution God Has Already Provided for His Church**

God has provided care for Christians through relationships with other believers in the church. *“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love”* (Ephesians 4:16 NLT).

### **2. God Wants to Offer Care to Others Through His Church**

Believers are God's plan for comforting hurting people, bringing healing to those broken by sin, and helping those carrying a heavy burden. *“He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us”* (2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)).

- “Who am I connected to in the body of Christ that could provide care for me during my time of need?”
- “Who is connected to me that I could care for in their time of need?”

## The Meaning Behind This Week's Next Steps:

How Community Happens at Bethany: It's all through BGroups, which are small gatherings of people who meet both virtually and in person all across the city and surrounding areas to grow in their relationship with both God and one another.

We have found that the best way to offer individuals a place to belong in groups is by breaking them into what we call Hubs. These hubs are made up of different demographics that allow you to connect with others in a similar season of life, such as: Bold Youth (5th - 12th), Collective Young Adults (18 - 30), Marriage & Family, Women, Men & PrimeTimers (65+).

Next, we encourage each BGroup to formally meet together for just two 14-week semester intervals each Spring and Fall. However, you can expect to connect informally as a group as well in a slightly different rhythm for the time in between. Both virtual and live in person groups in these hubs can be found in our online directory, found at [bethany.com/belong](http://bethany.com/belong). By searching for both campus + hub, you can sign up and get connected to a BGroup today!