



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Firstly, you will notice that at the start of each lesson there are three important bits of information. These will be the basic tools you need to lead the study.

All Scripture will appear in this BLUE colour. All Scripture references are taken from the NIV version of the Bible unless otherwise stated.

All discussion questions are in this GREEN colour. These discussion questions are meant to help open up times of sharing in your group.

Occasionally you will see text in RED. Red text are some ideas and thoughts that you may want to use for your group.

The bulk of the text will be in BLACK. This is the script and information for your lesson. However, please do not stick to the script word for word. The information is there just to serve as a guideline. Please feel free to lead or facilitate the discussion in the way which GOD is leading you.

Call To Community: Sacrificial Community

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Getting-to-Know-One-Another Question:

- What justice cause are you passionate about?

Opening Discussion Question:

- What are things in life that you consider worth making sacrifices for?

In our message series, we are exploring what it means to respond to Jesus' call to community.

In week one Pastor Steve talked about the prophetic call for us to begin to build a “contrast” community that is a foretaste of the Kingdom of God here in Hong Kong. We discussed together a definition of biblical community and from that definition highlighted six key themes – Christ-centred, hospitable, active, authentic, sacrificial, and Spiritual friendship. Every week we have been touching on one of the six key themes to unpack the kind of community God is calling us to be.

Sacrificial Community:

Over the last few weeks we have seen what a profound and beautiful invitation to community we have before us. Our hope is that the vision of this contrast community, and the invitation to be part of it, inspires and excites you. However, **“this kind of community will require something from you.** It will require something from each of us. Indeed, Christian community at its very core is participatory and involved, and will therefore necessarily be demanding. It is costly.”

- What are some of the ways that living in Christian community is costly?
- What do you personally find challenging about living in Christian community?

Joe Steinke a leader in the 24/7 missional community movement comments on the costliness of community when he writes, ‘Christian community reads romantically but lives sacrificially.’ It’s a community that is born out of sacrifice and is sustained by it.

In order to understand how our call to community and sacrifice are connected biblically we will look at the creation account in Genesis 2. In the creation account we can read about how God creates the first human being. We are told that Adam is created out of soil and that God breathes life into him. However, there is a problem.

Read [Genesis 2:18](#):

[‘The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’](#)

- Take some time and share with each other what you believe the significance of God’s statement is.
- How have you experienced the truth that it is not good to be alone?

[For further Insights on the use of the word “helper,” please go to the end of the study]

Right from the start, the Bible makes clear that we are created to be connected to each other. We are created to live in community.

Read [Genesis 2:21-23](#)

“21 So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 23 The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called “woman”, for she was taken out of man.’”

God did not create Eve in the same way He created Adam. He could have gathered up soil formed it and breathed life upon her. But that is not what happened. Instead he removed a rib from Adam and out of it formed Eve. “In order for Adam to be in community there was a deeper personal cost for him. God takes a rib from Adam, and in that moment of personal loss Adam gained something far more valuable than anything he could ever had imagined. Adam needed to lose something from himself in order to gain something God desired for him. There was a personal cost to the creation of his community.” It’s a community that is formed out of personal cost.

- How have you seen this principle – that community is formed out of personal cost – at work in your own life?

Throughout the Bible we can observe that there is a link between sacrifice and relationship. When we look at Jesus we see the ultimate link between sacrifice and community. Jesus laid down his life to restore community with humanity. Through His life, death, and resurrection forgiveness of sin and an invitation into His community is made available to all. Laying down His life on the cross came at a high personal cost for Jesus. Jesus’ costly death on the cross birthed the church.

“A commitment to others will always demand some form of self-giving on our part.”
Moreover, “Community is a give and take, an interpersonal flow of serving and receiving.”

- Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- When you join a Christian community do you ever think about that there are both giving and receiving aspects to it?

There is a tension that we all experience, “God is calling you to sacrifice, he is calling you to a personal cost. You need to count that cost. And that is our great challenge, for let’s be honest with ourselves – none of us want to make this sacrifice or pay this cost naturally.”

- What personal and cultural forces work against your willingness to pay the cost that is needed for true Christian Community?

Since our default is to choose comfort over sacrifice, we need something at work in us to enable us to do it.

Read 1 John 3:11-18

'11 For this is the message you heard from the beginning: we should love one another. 12 Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15 Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. 16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.'

Read 1 John 4:19:

'We love because he first loved us.'

- Why do you think John encourages his community to not be like Cain? What is Cain an example of? [Hint: Cain's action was community destroying. He was acting out of self-interest.]
- What vision does verses 16-18 paint for us of what love and sacrifice looks like in community?
- How does Jesus' love for you enable you to love others?

"The formation of the kind of community God is calling Lifezone Church to will require all of us to exchange our self-interest for self-sacrifice. And the only way we will ever be able to do this is through love – the radical, selfless, abundant love of Jesus."

Closing Challenge:

"So are you prepared to do your part? Are you willing to count the cost and to face up to it in order to build the community we are speaking about in this season? To have the grace to forgive, to commit to unhurried time, to use your resources, to host at personal cost, to brave authenticity, to be willing to be vulnerable?"

- Take some time to reflect on this challenge. Take some time to pray on your own or with another person for God to give you the grace, strength and courage to invest yourself in community and to give of yourself.
- Ask God if there is a specific way He is calling you to give of yourself in this season.

Further Insights:

"Helper" here does not mean subordinate. The Psalms frequently use the same Hebrew word for "helper" to refer to God (Psalm 33:20). The description of the creation of the woman emphasises equality.

Pray

End