



Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions at the end of page 2.

---

**SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE**  
for the sermon preached on May 9, 2021  
Finding Our Way Forward Week 4: "The Way of Togetherness"  
Acts 9:36-43



This spring, as we look ahead to life on the other side of the pandemic, we're reading through the Acts of the Apostles, and observing how the earliest Christians navigated the unsettled times following Jesus's resurrection and ascension. So far, we've discovered that the way forward for us as a church is the Way of Jesus—staying focused on Christ's life and message. It's the Way of Discovery—being learners, not experts. It's the Way of the Spirit—seeking the Holy Spirit through prayer. This week, Pastor Bryan helps us explore the Way of Togetherness.

**Group Discussion Questions**

- Pastor Bryan began by describing a spectrum of mental health, ranging from **depression** at one end to **flourishing** at the other, with **languishing** being somewhere in the middle. Languishing is described as feeling stagnant, empty, joyless, unmotivated, lacking focus.
  - In what ways does this description of languishing line up with some of your experiences over the past year, or with the experiences of your loved ones?
  - If languishing is feeling stagnant, unmotivated, and depleted, how would you describe what **flourishing** looks like?
- Ask two people to read Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-35 out loud. As Pastor Bryan said, these passages don't necessarily **prescribe** how the church should function, but **describe** what a Spirit-filled community looks like, and how its members care for one another.
  - How did the members of the Acts community show their care for one another? What did they do, and how did they relate to one another?
  - What indications does Luke give us that the community was flourishing?
- Pastor Bryan suggested two antidotes to languishing: **care** and **connection**. With regard to **care**, he observed: "To care is to look after someone; to provide what is needed for

their health or happiness... Let's not miss how radical the first Jesus followers were in caring for one another's physical and material needs."

- What is an example of a time when someone has cared for you in a concrete and meaningful way (or when you have been able to care for someone else)?
- As Pastor Bryan said, "Wouldn't it be great if it could be said of Grace Chapel 'that there were no needy persons among us!'" What are some of the more obvious and less obvious ways that people in our church are in need, after more than a year of pandemic? How can we creatively respond to those needs?
- The second key to the flourishing community Luke describes is **connection**. To be connected is to be in touch with someone, to be in close proximity, to be involved.
  - What are some of the ways of connecting with people you have missed over the past fourteen months?
  - Why is connecting with one another in different ways vital for a church community to flourish?
- Bryan ended the sermon with the story of Tabitha in Acts 9. Invite a member of your group to read Acts 9:36-43 out loud.
  - How do each of the various characters in this story show care for other members of the community (Tabitha, her fellow disciples, the widows, Peter)?
  - Why is a community in which members care well for one another so attractive to outsiders? When have you experienced this?

### Prayer Suggestion

Lord, we pray that as we come together again as a church, you will renew our relationships, rekindle our love for one another, inspire us to care for one another boldly and creatively, and make our community so beautiful and strong that others can't help but be drawn to it. In Christ's name. Amen.

### How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Coach or Campus Pastor with questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. Please reach out to Pastor Tim or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team with questions about or feedback on the Study Guides.

Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.](https://www.biblica.com/)® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.