



Gardening: Healthy | May 9, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Successful gardening requires planning. And so does our faith. It's much more than just our own personal desires and goals.

Key Verses

Acts 2:42 (NIV)

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Discussion

If you want the best crop or yield out of your garden, it takes a lot of planning. You have to think about things like spacing, the male or female traits of plants, and which plants will thrive next to one another. You can't plant something next to another plant if the vines will choke it and inhibit growth. But if you plan correctly, some plants can actually thrive and support one another, and grow healthier and bigger yields than they would on their own.

1. Why do you think some plants thrive when they are planted next to one another? Does this seem counterintuitive to you?
2. How can you apply this concept to your own life? How have you seen this played out in healthy relationships you have?

A lot of times when we think about our faith and our relationship with God, it's very personal. But when it's *only* personal, we don't experience the same amount of meaning and benefit as we do when we involve others. It can take planning to think about involving other people in our faith lives – people with different experiences and backgrounds. Many times, we have to go out of our way or inconvenience ourselves to make this happen. When we all come together, however, we experience a much more healthy and rich faith life.

3. Do you default to thinking about your faith very personally? Why do you think this might be true for most people?
4. Have you experienced a spiritual community of believers with diverse experiences and backgrounds? If so, in what ways were your eyes opened? If not, why do you think that is?

In Acts 2:42, we get a really clear picture of the early church. The members of the early church spent a lot of time together. They shared meals, life and prayer. When they came together – a bunch of different people with different backgrounds – they had a deep sense of awe and wonder about what God was doing in their midst. Onlookers started to show up to their gatherings simply because they were so attracted to what they saw. Something about the concept of sharing life the way we are meant to is inherently attractive to people because it's in our human design to desire connection.

5. Why do you think sharing a meal with other people is powerful? Have you experienced this? When and in what setting?
6. What do you think is attractive about the early church model? Do you think we have retained some of the same elements today in our churches? Why or why not?

What's Next?

Our job as followers of Christ is to introduce people to God and plant them in a healthy environment in which they can grow. There are a few practical ways we can teach people how to engage in spiritual community like we see in the early church. Known as spiritual practices, these are: 1) to give of our time and money, 2) to serve, and 3) to connect. We are wired to be connected with and journey alongside one another. Sharing life with one another is clearly part of God's design for our own personal spiritual growth.

This week, as you live out your faith, consider the places you personally can give, serve and connect so that you can have a healthy, rich spiritual life. In addition, think about who you can invite into a spiritual community to give, serve and connect so they can grow as well.