# Water of Life Community Church
# LIFE OF A JESUS FOLLOWER
### WEEK FOUR: CONNECT—I BELONG

Leader Notes

**HEBREWS 10:24-25; JOHN 1:12; ROMANS 8:15-16**

## ICE BREAKER

**When in your life have you experienced the strongest sense of community? What caused that bond to be so great?**

**What are some ways knowing other Christians has strengthened your faith?**

*If we're walking in a relationship with God, we'll naturally desire to be in relationships with other Jesus followers. Jesus modeled this for us by building His ministry through a close-knit group of disciples. His example shows us we'll never experience the best God has for us apart from relationship with others.*

## OPEN IN PRAYER

*Father God, thank You that relationship with You means relationship with your family, the body of Christ. In this world we have treasured individualism, and while You have created us each uniquely, You did so for greater purpose than any one person can realize on his or her own. Show us what it means to live rightly as members of Christ's body. Help us engage in community so that the world might know we belong to You. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## WORSHIP

If you're looking for help with worship, head to https://vimeo.com/album/2977729 and choose a couple of the songs you find there. The password is wolsg. (We've also added a link to this page in the Leader Toolbox, Password: WOLLEADER.) Worship is also available at the beginning of each teaching video on our YouTube channel at mywolgroup.com.

## INTRODUCTION

Being a Jesus follower begins with a relationship with God, this was the focus of the last two weeks. The next two sessions are built on the truth that being a Jesus follower isn't just about a relationship with God. From the very beginning, people were created for community (Gen. 2:18). God created us to enjoy a relationship with Him in the context of relationships with others.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**1. WATCH THE VIDEO, "SESSION 4: CONNECT—I BELONG."**

**a. Vance taught that God created us for community. How do the people you know demonstrate a natural desire for relationship?**

**b. Why should a right relationship with God compel us to have deep relationships with other Christians?**

**2. READ HEBREWS 10:24-25.**

**a. Have you ever heard someone say they love Jesus, but they don't like the church? Why is this not something a follower of Jesus can rightly believe?**

**b. How can believers stimulate or spur on each other in the context of meeting together? Outside the context of an organized group gathering?**

Our faith in Jesus is deeply personal, but it was never meant to be private. From the very beginning, God meant us to live out our faith in the context of a community. Christian community reflects the goodness of God. As our relationship with Him grows our desire to connect with other Christians will also grow.

**3. READ JOHN 1:12 AND ROMANS 8:15-16.**

**a. How does the image of a family help us better understand our connection to other Christians?**

**b. Vance said that church isn't "an event you attend but a family to which you belong." How does this statement challenge the way we often think about the church?**

**c. Outside of a group like this, how are you currently connecting with your brothers and sisters in Christ?**

**d. What are some ways you could grow and strengthen your relationships with other Jesus followers?**

God Himself has eternally existed in the community of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit. Our innate desire for community is one of the ways we know we've been made in God's image.

The entirety of the Bible was written to a group of people: first, the nation of Israel, then to the church of Jesus Christ. All of the New Testament letters were written to churches throughout the known world. The church isn't a place or an event but God's collected people. We're a family who relates to one another as brothers and sisters with God as their Father. The relationships that exist inside the church will exist forever because we'll still be connected to other Christians in eternity.

## PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Describe the value you place on your spiritual family.**

**How can you be more connected to God's family?**

**How can we help other believers who do not value the local church understand the importance of support provided through a church?**

Thank God for the blessing of relationships. Ask that He would strengthen the relationships in your Christian community. Pray for unity in the Spirit and a bond of peace (Eph. 4:4).

## GOING DEEPER

Subscribe to our e-devotionals by texting "edevotional" to 67076; or go to wolgroups.com and click on the eDevotional button for daily testimonies.

## MEMORY VERSE

**Hebrews 10:24-25 Christian Standard Bible (CSB)**

**"And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, 25 not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching."**

## COMMENTARY

### HEBREWS 10:24-25

This exhortation calls us to responsibility to one another. The appeal to consider demands concentrated attention. The goal of this attention was to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. As Christians we have a corporate responsibility. We must help others who stumble and falter. We must concentrate on the needs of others and not on our individual salvation only. To spur other believers forward in the Christian life, followers of Christ must meet together. Some of the readers of Hebrews were neglecting to meet together for worship, and this limited their ability to give and receive encouragement toward good works. Christians who meet together with the aim of promoting godliness and love for one another can be remarkably successful in their ventures.

### JOHN 1:12

Early in his book, John established the heart of the gospel, still two chapters away from the famous John 3:16. From the announcement of regeneration followed by apathy, the apostle introduces the acceptance of regeneration. Like most things in life, there is a right way and a wrong way to respond

to God. The right way (and the only meaningful way) is to believe the gospel, receive the Savior, and accept new birth as a result. The wrong way somehow links a relationship to God with human qualities such as physical birth, self-determination, or the choice of another person. In John's theological vocabulary, believed and received are synonymous when it comes to the gospel.

**ROMANS 8:15-16**

Paul declares that believers are children of God in whom there should be no fear. What is the fear that Paul says has been removed by the presence of the Spirit of God? Essentially and psychologically, it probably comes closest in our modern era to the codependent person or the addict getting well. Oftentimes people fear losing what has provided their identity for a significant period of time. The void left by the absence of sin will be filled by the Spirit and works of righteousness in time, but there is an initial fear.

Instead of a spirit of fear, we have received a spirit of sonship, or adoption. Adoption is a strictly Pauline metaphor, one common to him and his readers in Rome, due to the practice of adoption in the Roman Empire. One who was not a natural son is adopted by a father and given every legal right of sonship held by the natural sons. He is made an heir of the father, and given equal standing (often a more privileged standing) with the father's natural progeny. Because Paul does not expand the metaphor in detail, the careful expositor will not do so either, pushing cultural aspects of Roman adoption into the realm of sanctification. But the key point—legal standing as a child of God—is fully represented by Paul's adoption metaphor: Jesus Christ is God's (only) natural Son and believers are adopted into the family of God and made "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

As an adoption record in a court of law receives a stamp, seal, or signature verifying its authenticity, and validating the adoptee's rights from that day forward, so the believer is given a seal by God. The Holy Spirit is given to believers to be a "deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Cor. 1:22). "Having believed," Paul says, we were "marked in Christ with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1:13). In Romans Paul says that the Holy Spirit plays a unique role, testifying with the spirit of the believer that we are God's children. By the presence and power of the Spirit, we call out to God in a personal way—Abba, Father. The Spirit gives us that liberty in our spirits because we know from Him that we are God's children. But the believer is not just a child of God, but an heir of God as well. Being a child means that I have a family now; being an heir means I am included in the family forever.