

WEEK 8

EXPAND THE CIRCLE

Reading: Chapters 14-15 - The Circle Has to Keep Expanding + You Were Never Meant to Do This Alone

WEEKLY FOCUS

Healthy community is never meant to become a closed circle. We were **CREATED** for community, **FORMED** through community, and now we are **SENT**. The final week turns everything outward. We remember who made room for us, notice who may still be standing at the edge, and choose to pull up another chair.

THE AIM

This final gathering is both reflection and commissioning. The goal is not simply to review what everyone learned. It is to help the group name what has changed, identify what still needs to change, and decide how they will continue building biblical community after the eight-week experience ends.

BEFORE YOU GATHER

- Read Chapters 14-15.
- Complete the personal Reflection questions at the end of both chapters.
- Review the Chapter 14 and Chapter 15 Discussion Guide sections in the back of the book.
- Come ready to answer: **Who made room for me, and who might God be asking me to make room for now?**
- Think back over the entire eight weeks and identify one truth or picture that has most changed the way you think about community.

LEADER PREPARATION

Do not let the final week feel like merely finishing a curriculum. Create room for testimony. Ask people to name where they have grown, where God has challenged them, and what they want to carry forward.

LEADER NOTE

The movement of the book reaches its destination here:

CREATED for community.

FORMED through community.

SENT from community.

A healthy circle has relationships deep enough to sustain the people inside it and a posture open enough to notice the people outside it.

CONNECT | 10 MINUTES

Begin with the opening question from Chapter 15:

START HERE

What is one truth about community from this book that has challenged or changed the way you think about relationships?

Let everyone answer if time allows. This is the final week, so hearing what has stayed with each person matters.

LOOK BACK | 10-15 MINUTES

Invite the group to look back over the whole journey. You might name the recurring pictures from the book: **the garden, the tent, the circle, the net, the table, and the other boat.**

Ask: **Which picture connected with you most, and why?** Then ask: **Where have you actually lived differently because of something we discussed?**

DISCUSS + GO DEEPER | 25-30 MINUTES

Use the existing Chapter 14 and Chapter 15 Discussion Guide questions as the backbone. Chapter 14 asks whether our community remains open to people who are not yet inside it. Chapter 15 brings the major themes of the book together and asks what must change in our relational lives.

Do not try to complete every question. Give priority to testimony, honest reflection, and concrete next steps.

GO DEEPER - LEADER PROMPTS

Has finding community made you more aware of lonely people or less aware?

Who once made room for you?

Who might be standing at the edge of your circle right now?

Where are you still tempted to hide, isolate, or carry something alone?

What relationship needs more intentional investment?

What would it look like for you to become a safe person, not only find safe people?

After eight weeks, what is one area of your relational life where you know something needs to change?

READ TOGETHER

SCRIPTURE - ACTS 2:42-47

Read the passage again, now through the lens of the entire journey.

Notice what was happening **inside** the community and what was happening **around** it. The believers were learning, praying, eating, worshiping, and caring for one another, while new people continued to be added.

Ask: **How can a community remain deep and connected while continuing to make room?**

SCRIPTURE - GENESIS 2:18

Return to where the book began: **"It is not good for the man to be alone."**

Ask: **After everything we have learned, what does this verse mean to you now that it did not mean eight weeks ago?**

LEADER EMPHASIS

Belonging was never meant to stop with us.

Chapter 14 reminds us that somebody made room for us. Now we become people who make room for others. Chapter 15 brings the challenge home: community cannot only be about finding safe people. It is also about becoming one.

KEY TRUTH

PULL UP ANOTHER CHAIR.

The love of Jesus was never meant to stop with us.

LIVE IT TOGETHER | 10 MINUTES

FINAL PRACTICE - KEEP BUILDING COMMUNITY

Choose one relationship to intentionally invest in.

Do not wait for greater connection to happen on its own.

Have one conversation that moves beyond the surface.

If you have been carrying something alone, tell someone you trust.

Take the next healthy step toward repair.

If a relationship needs attention, own the part that belongs to you.

Notice someone outside the circle.

Introduce yourself. Invite them. Include them. Serve them. Pull up another chair.

PRAY TOGETHER | 10-15 MINUTES

Let the final prayer time feel like a commissioning. Thank God for what He has done in the group and pray that the relationships formed here become a way of life rather than an eight-week experience.

- Thank God for the people He has used to make room for us.
- Pray for courage to remain known rather than returning to hiding.
- Pray for relationships strong enough to carry both truth and burdens.
- Pray for healing and wisdom in relationships that still need repair.
- Pray for eyes to notice people standing at the edge of the circle.
- Pray that the group would become people who create biblical community wherever God sends them.

FINAL MOMENT

If appropriate, invite each person to finish this sentence aloud:

COMMISSIONING REFLECTION

"Because of what God has shown me through this journey, I will..."

Do not rush this moment. Let each person name a concrete response. Then pray over the group together.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Remind the group that finishing the guide is not finishing the work. Community is not something we complete. It is something we continue to build, protect, practice, repair, and extend.

KEEP GOING

Read together. Talk honestly. Listen well. Pray together. Show up. Stay present. Share the load. Make room.

And when the net gets heavy, signal the other boat.

You were never meant to do this alone.

CREATED. FORMED. SENT.