

WEEK 3

BUILD YOUR CIRCLE

Reading: Chapters 4-5 - Build Your Circle Before the Net Breaks + Who Is in Your Tent?

WEEKLY FOCUS

Healthy community is not built only when life falls apart. It is built before the net breaks. This week helps the group identify the people who can help carry the weight of life and then think intentionally about relational access. **Who is in the other boat, and who is in your tent?**

THE AIM

Week 2 invited people to come out of hiding. Week 3 asks what happens next. We do not simply need more people around us. We need trustworthy relationships built with intention. Chapter 4 focuses on building a circle before crisis. Chapter 5 adds wisdom by showing that not everyone should have the same level of access to our lives.

BEFORE YOU GATHER

- Read Chapters 4-5.
- Complete the personal Reflection questions at the end of both chapters.
- Review the Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 Discussion Guide sections in the back of the book.
- Come prepared to think honestly about who you call when life gets heavy and who has close access to your life.

LEADER PREPARATION

This week holds two truths together: **we need people, and we need wisdom about people.** Avoid turning the conversation into ranking friends or publicly naming people who have disappointed us. Keep the focus on intentionality, trust, reciprocity, and becoming the kind of person who can carry someone else well.

LEADER NOTE

Community is not just asking, **"Who will show up for me?"** It also asks, **"Whose net am I helping carry?"** Healthy community is reciprocal.

CONNECT | 10 MINUTES

Begin with the opening question from Chapter 4:

START HERE

When something significant happens in your life, good or bad, who are the first people you want to call?

Let the group notice what their answers reveal. Some people may immediately know their circle. Others may realize they have many relationships but very few people they would actually call.

LOOK BACK | 10 MINUTES

Ask: **What stayed with you from Chapters 4 and 5?**

Then ask: **Did either chapter make you think differently about the people around you or the access you give them?**

DISCUSS + GO DEEPER | 30-35 MINUTES

Turn to the existing Discussion Guide for Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 uses Peter's breaking net to explore why community must be built before crisis, who is in the other boat, and whose net we are helping carry. Chapter 5 turns toward relational access, boundaries, trust, and the people who are close enough to see what the crowd never sees.

You do not need to cover every question. Let the book guide the conversation and slow down when something important surfaces.

GO DEEPER - LEADER PROMPTS

What makes it difficult to ask for help before things become overwhelming?

What qualities make someone trustworthy enough to have close access?

Have you confused having a lot of people around you with having a circle?

How can boundaries protect community without becoming walls that prevent it?

Are you as dependable for your circle as you hope they will be for you?

What relationship may need more intentional investment before a crisis comes?

READ TOGETHER

SCRIPTURE - LUKE 5:1-11 + MARK 5:35-43

Luke 5: Peter's blessing became more than he could manage alone, so he signaled his partners. Notice that there were people close enough to respond when the net became too heavy.

Mark 5: Jesus did not take the entire crowd into the room. He loved many people, but He demonstrated different levels of relational access.

LEADER EMPHASIS

You need people before you need people. Crisis is a difficult time to manufacture trust. Build relationships now. At the same time, biblical community does not mean giving everyone equal access. Love can be broad while trust and access are built with wisdom.

LIVE IT TOGETHER | 5-10 MINUTES

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE - STRENGTHEN YOUR CIRCLE

Identify the people you would signal if your net became too heavy. Then take one intentional step toward strengthening one of those relationships this week.

Also ask the reciprocal question: **Would those people put my name on their list too?**

Do something tangible. Make the call. Schedule the meal. Check in. Offer help. Be present. Community is something we build before we desperately need it.

PRAY TOGETHER | 10 MINUTES

Invite the group to pray for wisdom in relationships and courage to build healthy, reciprocal community.

- Thank God for the people He has already placed around you.
- Ask God to show you relationships that need greater intentionality.
- Pray for wisdom about trust, access, and healthy boundaries.
- Ask God to make each person someone who shows up when another person's net gets heavy.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Remind everyone that a strong circle is not built by accident. It grows through repeated presence, trust, honesty, and mutual care.

NEXT WEEK

Read Chapters 6-7: Sharpened, Not Shamed + Walking Close: Share the Load.

Next week moves from identifying our circle to asking what healthy people actually **do** for one another: they sharpen us, tell us the truth in love, and help carry the weight.

YOU WERE NEVER MEANT TO DO THIS ALONE.