

ENGAGE



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I practice being present with others

TRY THESE IDEAS

Small Group: Join a small group at Grace, and be intentionally present and authentic with the group.

Text: Text someone you know and ask how you can pray for them. Follow through by praying regularly, and check back in with them.

Listen: Have coffee with someone and practice asking good questions and actually listening (asking follow up questions) rather than talking. Resist the urge to solve any problems or turn the attention to yourself.

Hospital Run: Find out the name of someone in the church who is in the hospital, or homebound, due to health. Stop by and read Psalm 121 (or another scripture) to them, and then pray for them.

Attend Consistently: Make missing the weekly church service a rare occasion. Take the initiative to introduce yourself to someone you don't know at church and ask them a few questions about their family. Make it a goal to meet one new person each week.

Posture Of Presence: Practice eye contact and be conscious of what your body language is saying. Try to communicate that being with this person is the most important thing in your life right now.



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I practice
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Developing rhythms
in my relationship
with the church

Engage *I practice being present with others*

We often seem to have better relationships with our phones than we do with real people. How often do we see someone in a restaurant, or public place, surrounded by their own friends or family, and they are on their phones? Being present has become more difficult, so when we choose to do so it makes a huge impact. To engage is to be present and attentive to others, to take genuine interest, and to practice empathy. It is a rhythm that must be regularly practiced in order to grow. The great news is that it's becoming such a lost art, that even small efforts can produce amazing growth in our relationships with others.

PRACTICES

QUESTIONS : Learn to ask open ended questions of the people in your life. Limit “yes” or “no” answers and take real interest in others. After you ask the question, actually listen to the answers, ask follow-up questions, and go deeper. The goal is to go beyond the surface with others allowing them to feel seen and heard.

BE PRESENT: Eliminate common distractions and “safety blankets” from your relational times. This includes things such as phones, watches, and tablets that can send a message suggesting you aren’t available. Notice what is happening around you. Pay attention to tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions of the people you are talking with. Seek to understand them beyond the surface.

I SEE YOU: Write down the names of 10-15 people in your life. Next to their names write 3 words about them. Review the words. Are they shallow (physical appearance type-words) or do they reflect a deeper understanding? Find the people you clearly don't know as well and make it a point to engage more fully with them. Find things about them to compliment. Empathize with their struggles and fears, and continue building into the relationships around you until you feel you truly see them for who they are.

DIG IN

Read Mark 5:21-43

In what ways do you notice Jesus being “present” for the various people in this story? What does He do? How does He talk with them?

While there is much to distract Him, He still seems to find ways to focus His attention on the other person. What can we learn from this for our interactions with people?

Read Hebrews 10:24-25

What does it mean to “consider” another person?

Why is it important that we consider them when trying to figure out what will stir them up? How can we better know what will help them grow?

How does neglecting to meet with other Christians impact their growth and ours? How are we both affected?

RESPOND

Of the three practices (Questions, Be Present, I See You), which feels most natural to you? Which stands out as an area for growth? If a practice is natural for you, take it to the next level. If a practice is an area where you would like to grow, make a plan to read more about it, and seek out others who do it well or have incorporated it into their lives. Then, actively and intentionally try out that practice for a month. Write down how you have seen God working in you, and others, as a result of anticipating God's movement through the practice.

Summarize what you've learned about engaging with others from this study:

Community with others is not something we often “find,” it’s something we create. By choosing to be present with others, taking sincere interest in them and linking up with them, community will be fostered. You’ll find many verses describing how Christians are meant to relate to “one another.” Here is a list of verses to get you started, but feel free to look up more (there are over 100 of them!): Colossians 3:13; Philippians 2:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 5:11; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:9; 5:5; Galatians 5:13; 6:2; Ephesians 4:15; 4:32; Romans 12:10; 13:8; 14:13; James 5:16. Practice some of the “one anothers” with people around you and create stronger community.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Knowing God by J. I. Packer

The Good and Beautiful Community: Following the Spirit, Extending Grace, Demonstrating Love by James Bryan Smith

Crucial Conversations Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High by Kerry Patterson

Befriend: Create Belonging in an Age of Judgment, Isolation, and Fear by Scott Sauls

Everybody’s Normal ‘Til You Get to Know Them by John Ortberg

FOR KIDS

God’s Big, Big Church by Pamela Kennedy



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