

SMALL GROUP LAUNCH WEEKEND

TALK IT OVER

Small Group Launch Weekend

Pastor Stacie Wood

September 6-7, 2025

If you would like to watch the weekend message, visit www.saddleback.com/watch.

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the questions provided or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions toward the end of the document.

Scriptures

Genesis 2:18 (NIV); Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV); Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

Questions

1. The first time God says something is “not good” is in Genesis 2:18 (NIV): “*It is not good for the man to be alone.*” The truth is—we are relational beings created in the image of a relational God! How does God’s creation of a companion for Adam reflect on our nature as relational beings? How does Genesis 2:18 emphasize the danger of living life alone? Share an experience you’ve had in a small group, secular or Christian, that highlights the benefits of community.
2. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV) says, “*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*” How does the idea of being stronger together versus alone reflect the broader message of community in the Bible? Specifically, what lessons for daily life does Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 teach us with regard to the benefits of being in relationship with others?
3. Acts 2:42-47 (NIV) gives us a snapshot of the early church after the coming of the Holy Spirit: “*They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke*

bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” In what settings, large and small, did the early church meet? How does the passage describe the quality of community among the believers? Notice that in Christ, no one is an island in themselves. We don’t live by ourselves; spiritual life is fostered through relationships.

4. Science has a way of proving the Bible—including the fact that we are relational beings! For example, The Surgeon General reports that a lack of social connection carries a mortality risk comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day! Another statistic indicates that social isolation increases our risk for heart disease by 29%, our risk of a stroke by 32%, and our risk of developing dementia by a whopping 50%! Science shows us that healthy relationships reduce stress, promote better healing, develop healthier behavior, give us a sense of purpose, and promote a longer life! Discuss in your group how science proves that we are relational beings.
5. We see throughout the Bible that God designed life to be lived in community! But the reality still exists that we cannot be deeply known and personally cared for in large group settings. In small group settings, we’ll likely grow in our spiritual journeys, our marriages will be stronger, our relationships with our kids will be better, and even our health will improve! Discuss.
6. We’re all messy; don’t wait until you’ve got your life tidied up to let people in! God is inviting us to sort through the mess together! Jesus called a bunch of messy disciples to apprentice under Him in community! Don’t try to pretend you’re better than the apostles—that your life’s not a little bit messy, too! Discuss how Christ’s example of discipleship with the Apostles gives you hope that you can be the Lord’s disciple too in small groups!
7. Our whole lives fight against living in community! But the fact remains that we are relational beings created by a relational God! If you want to follow the way of Jesus, there are some parts of your spiritual formation that will never happen apart from community. Incessant busyness in the world, constant "connectivity" with technology, and hyper-individualism living alone—all these elbow out community! As Socrates said, "Beware of the barrenness of a busy life"! If you are not intentionally elbowing out space in your calendar for rich, meaningful relationships, the likelihood is that, over time, you will have lots of surface level relationships, but no true community! What’s keeping you from deeper connections—busyness, technology, independence? Discuss in your group how you can elbow out space in your calendar for intentional community! What type of small group would you fit best in now (i.e., Bible Study, Faith at Work, Shared Interests, or Care/Outreach, etc.)? How can you make living in relational community a priority in your life—and join (or lead! or start!) a small group this week?!

To use the new Small Groups Finder, go to <https://welcome.saddleback.com/groups/find-a-group> and select “Filter” on the top right.

Three Essential Questions

Are you interested in the Bible and in helping small groups benefit from the weekend message? Well, you are in luck! Saddleback members like you create these discussion guides each week. If you are interested in joining the team, please email Maturity@saddleback.com

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message.

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

Small Group Action Steps

1. Consider taking the Group Health Assessment in your small group. This assessment will help you see how your small group is balancing the five purposes and will give you suggested next steps for each purpose. Click here to take the Group Health Assessment:
<https://saddleback.com/connect/smallgroups#spiritualCheckup>
2. Did you know that Saddleback produces many new small group studies each year? Visit <https://saddleback.com/studies> to check out Saddleback's ever-growing library of small group curricula.

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