



# *Living in Community*

4 Bible Studies - August 2025



# Teaching Series:

## Living in Community

### PRIMARY AIM

- To theologically explore different dimensions to living in a community.

### SUBSIDIARY AIMS

- To affirm those of us who may be experiencing loneliness and isolation, and to encourage our church to look out for others in this situation.
- To affirm the value of singleness and to hear the voices of those in our community who have chosen or not chosen to be single.
- To affirm the value of marriage and its purpose within community.
- To affirm friendships, whether they are close or distant friendships, as a fundamental part of community.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It is easy to talk about being a community, however living out a Christ-centred community is not so easy. And it is also easy to take for granted that we are all on the same page when it comes to thinking theologically around singleness and marriage. The vision for this series is to visit some key dimensions to a community. Of course, there are many more dimensions and possibilities that could be covered, such as ethnicity or stages of life, but this series aims to make a beginning at surfacing some key aspects of community.

Offering the Marriage Course, Parenting Course and Singles Forum has yielded interest in a broader discussion. A common response is “Everybody needs to hear this.” This series will provide an opportunity for more pastoral teaching on community matters that no doubt impact many who worship at our services each week.

At the end of the term, the 10am service is holding a QnA service where there will be opportunity to respond to questions asked during the series. The QR code is provided so Connect Group members can submit questions if they arise during the studies.

OUTLINE OF SERIES

Date		Title	Reading
1	3 Aug	Loneliness in a World of Digital Interactions	Genesis 2:18-24
2	10 Aug	The Value of Marriage in Today's World	Matthew 19:1-9
3	17 Aug	Singleness: To be Pitied or Pursued?	Matthew 19:10-12
4	24 Aug	The Case for Friendship	John 15:12-17

# Loneliness in a World of Digital Interactions

## 1

**01 What times in your life have you felt particularly lonely?**

**02 Spend a moment to write down your definition of loneliness then share it with the group. Do you notice any common themes?**

**03 There are many definitions of loneliness, as it is a subjective experience. Here are two to read and discuss. What do you like or not like about them?**

*Loneliness is a subjective experience of distressing feelings that arise when there is a divergence between an individual's desired and actual social relationships. It is a distressing emotional state that occurs when we perceive our social relationships to be inadequate in terms of quality, quantity, or both.*

- Morgan, R., Filia, K., Lim, M.H., & Baker, D. Young people and loneliness. Orygen and Ending Loneliness Together. 2024 ([link to PDF of report](#))

*The state of being unseen or unnoticed relationally, mentally, emotionally, physically, or spiritually. It can be driven by lack of purpose or meaning, relationship, and/or identity and is marked by a deep sense of hopelessness.*

- Dr Mark Mayfield, The Path out of Loneliness (p. 24).

**04 Break into pairs and pick one of the following verses. How might they speak to the previous definitions of loneliness?**

- a. Psalm 25:16.**
- b. Ruth 1:19-21.**

**05 Read Genesis 2:18-24. Apart from teaching about marriage, what does this teach us about relationships in general?**

**06 In Matthew 3:16–17, we see the Father, Son, and Spirit all present—how do you think this moment reveals about the love shared within the Trinity, and about God’s purpose for those he has created in his image?**

**07 Why do you think loneliness is such an issue in our society today?**

**08 In what ways do you notice the regular use of digital interactions (such as social media or digital communication) helping or hindering when it comes to building closer relationships in our life? Why or why not?**

**09 In the times when you feel lonely, what do you do that usually helps you feel better?**

**10 As a group, brainstorm to come up with 10 Scripture passages that offer comfort to those experiencing loneliness.**

*If you need some hints, here is a helpful article with 11 passages (<https://www.crossway.org/articles/11-passages-to-read-when-you-feel-lonely>).*

**11 For those feeling unseen, how might Luke 19:5 and Psalm 139:1-3 provide comfort?**

**12 For those feeling hopeless in their loneliness, how might the following passages of Matthew 28:20; Psalm 34:18 and 2 Tim 4:16-17 provide comfort?**

**13 We are ‘to carry each other’s burdens’ Gal 6:2. Are you aware of people in our church who are feeling loneliness? How can we as a Connect Group and as a church community seek to care for those who suffer from loneliness?**

**14 Prayer suggestion:** Pray for our church community and those who are experiencing loneliness.

**Want to submit a question for QnA Sunday 21 Sep?**

**Follow the link:**



# The Value of Marriage in Today's World

## 2

**01 If you had to create a promo for marriage, how would you sell it?**

**02 What are the pros and cons of marriage?**

- a. For those who are married, what's one thing that has surprised you about being married that you had not anticipated? Feel free to share a 'good' surprise and a 'not so good' surprise.
- b. For those who are single, how have you experienced marriage in the body of Christ? Feel free to share something that's been helpful and/or something that has been unhelpful.

**02 Read Matthew 19:1-9.**

[ Note that we will look at the next section next week as it relates to single people in the Body of Christ.]

**03. What is the Pharisees' intent in asking Jesus about divorce in v.3? How does Jesus redirect their focus?**

**04 How does Jesus' reference to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 (vv.4-5) shape our understanding of marriage?**

**05 What does this passage teach about the permanence and purpose of marriage?**

**06 How can churches uphold the sanctity of marriage while also extending grace to those affected by divorce?**

**07 How does the biblical understanding of marriage as a covenant differ from contemporary views of marriage? How do we lovingly hold the tension of these different expressions in our society?**

**08 Compare Matthew 19:4–6 with Ephesians 5:22–33. How is marriage a reflection of Christ's relationship to the Church?**

**09 The biblical narrative starts with a marriage and ends with a marriage with the first marriage being 'a trailer' for the second. Discuss this. How do you respond to this statement?**

**10 After Jesus teaches on marriage the disciples effectively say in v10 "Marriage is hard, maybe it's better to just stay single!" How would you respond to this if someone said this to you? Do you agree or disagree with this sentiment?**



**11 Adam writes:** *I've often thought that as congregation members and clergy we are excited when a couple marry, we celebrate and get excited, we officiate the ceremony in our churches and then we send the couple into the big wide world to make it on their own. Sadly when marriages struggle or even end, we can be harsh or judgemental about it. Historically we've often made once cherished church members feel less valued or welcomed when their marriages end.*

**How as a Church can we be more pro-active and intentional in loving and supporting married couples through all stages of married life.**

**12 Marriages**, in part, exist in a community to bless everyone in the community. When a couple marry, a new home is created. A home where children can be born and grow and be nurtured. But also a home where friends, community and extended network can be gathered. A place where weary guests can find hospitality and where people far away or disconnected from family can find family in Christ, a home away from home.

**Rather than making Christian marriage all about the couple, how can we promote a vision of marriage that blesses and enhances the life of the community?**

**13 Closing Prayer Suggestion:** Ask God for wisdom to honour His design for relationships and grace to live faithfully in our callings—whether in marriage or singleness.

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# Singleness: To be Pitied or Pursued? 3

**01 Whether married or not. None of us were born married. All of us have spent part of our lives being single and it is entirely possible that we will experience singleness again.**

- a. Share, have you spent more of your life married or single?**
- b. For those who have experienced both singleness and marriage, share something valuable that you've learned from each season.**
- c. For those who are single, share a perspective of either singleness or marriage (as you experience it in others) that is unique to your experience.**

**02 What are some of the myths of singleness that you have heard (or perhaps believed)?**

**03 Was there anything in Sunday's message that particularly stood out or that you perhaps found jarring?**

#### **04 Read Matthew 19:1-12 in its entirety.**

Pay special attention to Jesus' discussion about those who are single. Note that he uses a word not common in our vernacular today "Eunuch". Try not to get 'hung up' on this word Jesus defines Eunuchs within the Body of Christ effectively as those who are unmarried wither due to a physical condition or for a vocational purpose.

#### **05 How does Jesus elevate the single or celibate life in verses 11-12? Why was this countercultural then—and perhaps still now?**

#### **06 Read Deuteronomy 23:1. Discuss the status of Eunuchs in this period of history. How does Jesus' ministry shift our understanding of inclusion and value in the Body of Christ, irrespective of marital status?**

#### **07 Now read Isaiah 56:3-5. What did you notice? How does this echo Jesus' teaching about singleness? This must have represented a seismic shift for Jewish believers. How can it inform our own experience today?**

#### **08 Read 1 Corinthians 7:7-9, 25-40. How does Paul's teaching about singleness and marriage complement Jesus' words in Matthew 19?**

**09** While we avoid broadly using the phrase “called to singleness” some might say that they have a vocation that better “lends itself to singleness” or that in their particular circumstance they have experienced a call to singleness.

**How might the Church today reclaim a positive theology of singleness as a vocation and calling?**

**10** Singleness of course has broader implications in our communities. For example singleness in the bible reflects a call to celibacy. This is not necessarily the case in wider society.

**How do we lovingly hold the tension of these different expressions of singleness in our society, equip our Church and be a safe space for people with alternative perspectives to step into?**

**11** How can Christians practically support both married couples and those called to singleness in our Church community?

**12 Closing Prayer Suggestion:** Ask God to remove any barriers or roadblocks that would see married or single people differently. Help us find ways to love and build up all members of our Church and support them in their pursuit of Jesus. May God also help us to be a safe space for people with alternative perspectives to also engage.

***Want to submit a question for QnA Sunday 21 Sep?***

***Follow the link:***



# The Case for Friendship

# 4

**01 Do you think Christians are better at relationships than non-Christians? Why or why not?**

**02 What would you pick as your four top principles for friendship?**

**03 Read John 15:12-17. What is distinctive about the friendship Jesus has with his followers?**

**04 Read the following quote from Rebecca McLaughlin. What stands out as helpful?**

*Aristotle famously put friendship in three categories: friendships of pleasure, of utility, and of virtue. In today's terms, we might see the first as friendships built around shared interests; the second as networking; and the third as friendships we invest in a deeper sense—ones in which each person seeks the other's good and recognizes the goodness in the other as they seek to grow in goodness side by side. Many in our society today have friends of pleasure or utility; fewer have friends of virtue. These relationships take much more serious investment.*

- No Greater Love: A Biblical Vision for Friendship.

**05 Think about the way Christian relationships are expressed in the following verses. How might these situations challenge our ideas of friendship within the family of God?**

**a. John 11:3-5**

**b. Romans 16:13**

**c. 1 Corinthians 4:17**

**d. Philemon 10**

**e. Acts 2:44-46**

**06 Proverbs often give practical advice for relationships. What do these proverbs contribute to what makes a good friend?**

**a. Pr 13:20**

**b. Pr 19:4**

**c. Pr 27:5-6**

**d. Pr 18:13**

**07 What can we learn from Jesus' example as the perfect friend?**

**08 Read the following quote from Frances Schaeffer and discuss.**

*We are finite and therefore we do not expect to find final sufficiency in any human relationship, including marriage. The final sufficiency is to be found only in a relationship with God ... If a man tries to find everything in a man-woman, or a friend-friend relationship, he destroys the very thing he wants and destroys the one he loves. He sucks them dry, he eats them up and they, as well as the relationship are destroyed. But as Christians we do not have to do that. Our sufficiency of relationship is in that which God made it to be, in the infinite-personal God on the basis of the work of Christ in communication and love.*

**09 Go back to your top principles for friendship at question 2. Would you change or add anything to your list in light of this study?**

**10 Given the critical nature of friendship, how might we promote friendship with those at church? How can we include those outside our circle of existing friendships?**

**11 Pray for each other.**

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