



**COMMUNE**

PAUSE

EAT

ASK

COMMUNE

EXAMINE

*Love is  
or  
it ain't.*

*Thin love  
ain't love at all.*

— Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

# COMMUNE

**We Commune with at least two other Christians, committing to a small community that shares the mission of Jesus.** When walking through life with others, it quickly becomes clear that common goals and shared challenges lead to many of our most profound experiences of belonging. When practicing Commune, Christians give of themselves honestly and offer accountability to one another, creating a unique, missional community that's bound together by the Holy Spirit. Throughout history, Christians have brought hope, healing and peace to their culture and community through a notable commitment to a distinctive, yet attractive, life together (Hebrews 10:24–25). The church worships, prays, shares life and supports one another through hardships of all kinds (Acts 2:42–47), and the very presence of God is among even the smallest gathering of Christians (Matthew 18:20). We Commune with other followers of Jesus because it's essential to the Christian life and mission — we can't live fully without it.

*The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.*  
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

# DAILY HABITS

## TO HELP US PRACTICE PEACE:

### CHALLENGE

Each month we focus on a new practice (Pause, Eat, Ask, Commune, Examine) while building on those from previous months. These practices are meant to be practical, fitting into the flow of our daily lives as we invite the Holy Spirit to change us and create new, sustainable habits.

Grow together in shared mission by committing to two others.

**Pray** about and choose at least two others who are also keeping the Practices of PEACE.

**Share** challenges and celebrate how you are receiving peace and passing God's peace to others through the practices.

**Regularly encourage** each other to grow in generosity and accountability to the mission of Jesus.

### COMMITMENT

Prayerfully commit to small, sustainable steps in the Practice of Commune, as Jesus invites us to be transformed together.

**Pray and Commit.** Who are at least two people, also doing Practices of PEACE, to Commune with?

**Be intentional.** When will you “meet up” and what will that time look like?

**Acknowledge Hesitations.** What might be keeping you from the practice of Commune?

# DAILY HABITS<sub>CONT.</sub>

## PASS THE PEACE

Practicing PEACE fills us with the peace of Jesus, so we pass his peace to others. Because our city is in deep need and we are made to share peace with our neighbors, adopt one Hope for New York affiliate for the entire duration of practicing PEACE to extend the mercy that we have received to others.

**Dream Center:** Pack & distribute food boxes to families every third Friday of the month.

**Young Life:** Connect with & mentor teenagers on the Upper East Side.

**Safe Families:** Offer hope and encouragement to overwhelmed families through virtual connections.

**The Bowery Mission:** Meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness and hunger in the city.

**The Open Door:** Teach English or become a conversation partner with adult immigrants through virtual connections every third Saturday.

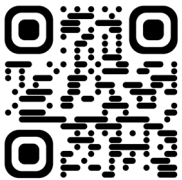
### Ask yourself these questions:

Which ministry most resonates with me?

What does my schedule allow?

Do I feel comfortable with in person or virtual?

*Scan to sign up to volunteer or donate online.*



## GOINGS ON

### PEACE: An Invitation to Commune, with Tim Keller

Sun, May 2, 8–9 p.m.

We were made for belonging. Tim Keller will lead us to discover how the belonging we and our world needs right now can be found in the practice of Commune. For when we foster Christian friendships that share common mission, authenticity and practices, we and the places we inhabit are transformed.

### Picnic for the PEACE

Sat, May 15, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Join us as we share in the mission of Jesus together through a church picnic! If possible, come with your Commune group to Central Park. We will safely eat together, talk and play some field day games. Hope to see you there!

*Circle the offerings that most interest you.*

# PEACE: AN INVITATION TO COMMUNE

with Tim Keller, Sun, May 2

**How** has your perspective on the practice of Commune changed by what you heard?

**What** does this practice reveal to you about the reality of the Christian life?

A large grid of small dots for writing notes, covering most of the page.

## Activities As You Commune

As you begin the practice of Commune, consider using the activities on the following pages to guide your initial meetings. While many of them can be done individually, we encourage you to walk through them together as a group.

# DEFINING MISSION AS YOU COMMUNE

It's an act of faith to invite two others to Commune — together living out the Practices of PEACE authentically. Though you may not have deep spiritual friendships right now, you can begin by inviting two others to join you for this practice.

Use the space below to individually define where God is sending you on mission. Then, when meeting up with your group, use the space on the adjacent page to together define the direction of your group by identifying common goals, shared challenges and the support you'll need from one another.

## Common Goals

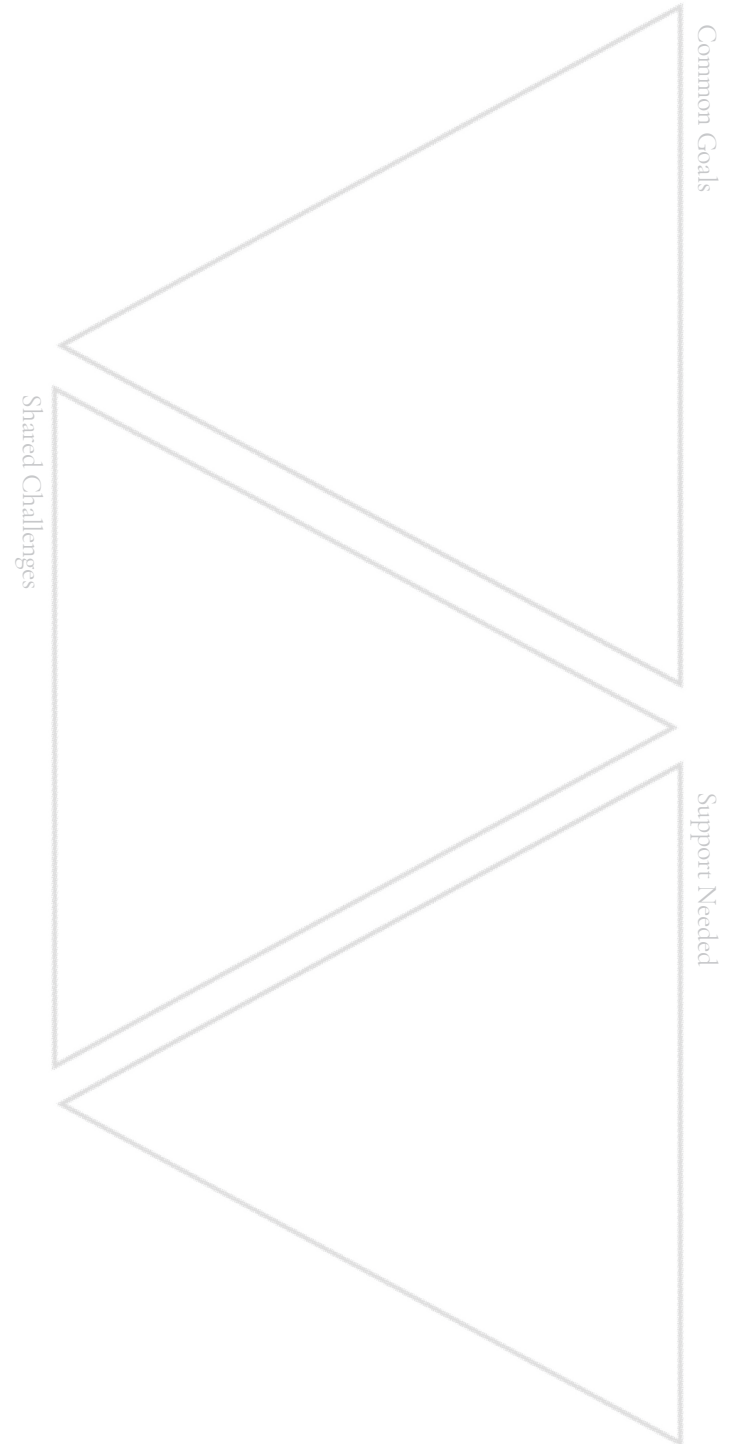
What are we passionate about? What area is God sending us on mission (relationships, work, neighborhood)?

## Shared Challenges

What are the landmines we need to navigate? What are our besetting weaknesses? Addictions? Fears? Temptations?

## Support Needed

How can we support one another in these common experiences?  
How can we celebrate and share God's work in our lives together?



# PRAYING THE BIBLE AS YOU COMMUNE

It's impossible to Commune apart from God. When we pray God works — in us and through us. Pray that God would form your Commune group, using these Scripture passages to guide your prayer when you meet together.

*Italics note any place the wording is slightly edited in order to pray using these passages.*

## Hebrews 10:24, 25

*Lord, help us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as we see the Day approaching.*

## Colossians 3:1-17

*Since we have been raised with Christ, we pray that you would set our hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. We pray that you would set our minds on things above, not on earthly things...Help us put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

*We pray we would rid ourselves of anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language; that we would not lie to each other, since we have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

*Therefore, as your chosen people, holy and dearly loved, help us clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Help us bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances we may have, forgiving as the Lord forgave us. And over all these virtues help us put on love, which binds us all together in perfect unity.*

*We pray that the peace of Christ would rule in our hearts, since we were called to peace, and that we would be thankful. We ask that the message of Christ would dwell among us richly as we teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to you with gratitude in our hearts. And whatever we do, whether in word or deed, may we do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

## Ephesians 3: 14-19

*Heavenly Father, we pray that out of your glorious riches you may strengthen us with power through your Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. And we pray that our [family, friendship, community group, church], being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

## Ephesians 4

*Father, help us to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. May we be completely humble and gentle and patient, bearing with one another in love. Help us keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

*Lord Jesus, help us speak the truth in love, in order to grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From you the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

*Holy Spirit, teach us in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus, with regard to our former way of life, to put off our old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of our minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

*Help us put off falsehood and speak truthfully to our neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In our anger, may we not sin; help us not let the sun go down while still angry, so we do not give the devil a foothold.*

*Lord, get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice in us, and make us kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave us.*



# COMMUNE IN SCRIPTURE

Scripture reveals authentic pictures of Commune, showing its beauty and challenges. Discuss with your group what God might specifically be revealing about Commune through each of these relationships. Discover together new ways you can trust God to use your Commune for his purposes and your good.

[ 1 ] **Commune as Covenant Friendship**

Jonathan & David  
*1 Samuel 18:1-5*

[ 2 ] **Commune as Counterculture**

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael & Azariah  
*Daniel 1*

[ 3 ] **Commune as Restorative Justice**

Paul, Philemon & Onesimus  
*Philemon 1:8-16*

[ 4 ] **Commune as Radical Commitment**

Ruth & Naomi  
*Ruth 1*

[ 5 ] **Commune as Devotion**

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Salome & Mary, mother of James  
*Luke 23:55-24:11*

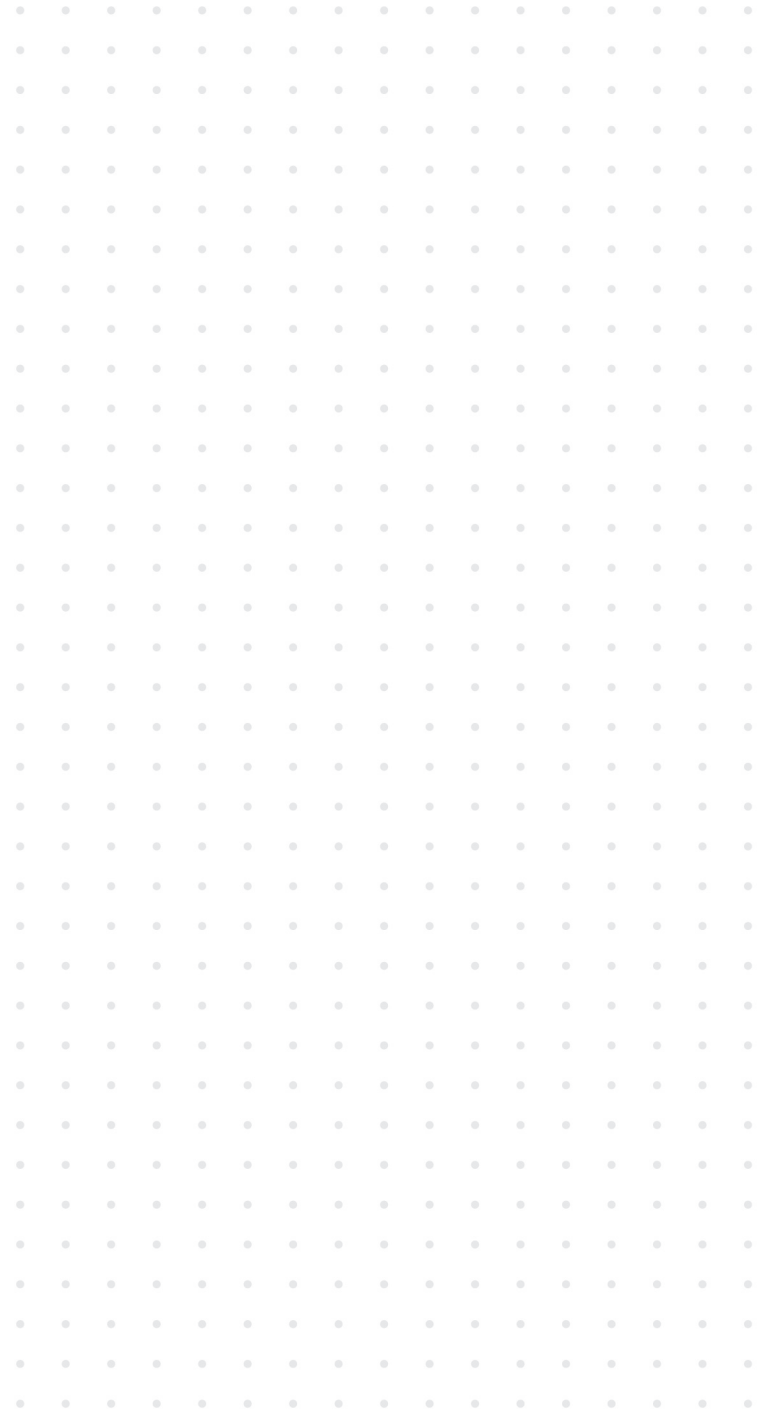
[ 6 ] **Commune as Mission**

Paul, Barnabas, John Mark, Silas & Timothy  
*Act 15:36-16:5*

[ 7 ] **Commune as the Nature of God**

The Trinity  
*Genesis 1:1-2, John 1:1-18*

In light of these pictures of Commune in the Bible, consider what God might want your Commune to look like. Spend some time discussing with your group and use the following page to reflect further.

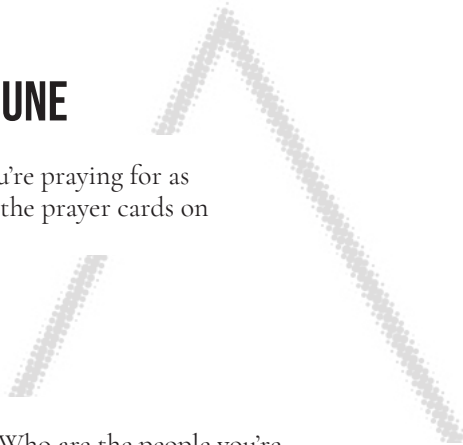


## INTERMISSION

Don't forget that Commune is a gift — so go enjoy it! Meet up for a picnic in Central Park. Play some games. Bike along the Hudson together. Share a pot of tea. Visit the Met. Laugh with one another. Enjoy!

# A PRAYER LOG FOR COMMUNE

Use this space to take note of those you're praying for as you Commune, and be sure to cut out the prayer cards on the following page.



How has Commune spurred you on in mission this week?

Who are the people you're praying for?

Amen.

Amen.

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Amen.

Amen.

Amen.

Amen.

Fold here

A prayer for  
with much love from

Fold here

A prayer for  
with much love from

Fold here

A prayer for  
with much love from

Fold here

A prayer for  
with much love from

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A prayer for  
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Fold here

A prayer for  
with much love from

What is good news to them in light  
of their history, hopes or hurts?

Write a short prayer for them.

+	+	+
+	+	+
+	+	+
+	+	+
+	+	+
+	+	+
+	+	+
+	+	+

*If the church is going to know more of the God for whom it thirsts, it has to learn from the “prodigal ministry” of those who don’t necessarily look or feel like they belong there. The fellowship must include both elder brothers and prodigals—and even those who have no memory of the Father’s house but who have simply wandered in because they finally started paying attention to their thirsty souls. If the church is going to be accessible to these thirsty souls, it dare not define itself by its boundaries. At times it might even seem unclear where the church stops and the world around it starts. Still, this confusion is no threat to the integrity of a church held together, not by its boundaries, but by its center—Jesus Christ. As long as we remain clear about this center, we can handle a good deal of ambiguity and diversity at the fuzzy boundaries.*

*None of us can be confident that we belong in the church. In reality, all of us are strangers to God’s righteousness, strangers being drawn by the Spirit of God closer and closer into the center of the church, who is Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*This vision of the church makes room for people who look and act differently from each other but who are tired of being on the run as a result of their thirst for God. There is room in the church for the homeless who are just looking for a place to lie down, as well as for the powerful who want a place where they don’t have to be in charge. There is room for the sinner who is looking for a place to tell the truth, as well as for the perfectionist who can never do enough. There is room for everyone who can make room for other strangers.*

— M. Craig Barnes, *Sacred Thirst*

While the practice of Commune has a uniting purpose, relationships can be messy. How does this reading impact your practice of Commune? How does it influence the relationships you’ve been praying for during the practices of Eat and Ask?

## AT MONTH'S END

How did God extend peace to you and through you as you practiced Commune?

How will you continue the practice of Commune?

*The community does not speak with words alone. It speaks by the very fact of its existence in the world; by its characteristic attitude to world problems; and, moreover and especially, by its silent service to all the handicapped, weak, and needy in the world. It speaks, finally, by the simple fact that it prays for the world. It does all this because this is the purpose of its summons by the Word of God. It cannot avoid doing these things, since it believes.*

— Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology*

**KIDS ON**

**COMMUNE**

## HEBREWS 10:24-25

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

When we practice Commune, we are intentionally taking time to connect with fellow Christians! We can experience the greatest sense of belonging when we spend time with our brothers and sisters in Christ. As believers, we accept the wonderful gift that God has given us - His son, Jesus, who died on the cross for our sins so that we could have a relationship with Him. By communing with other believers of Christ, we create a safe environment where we can share life together, support each other through hard times and create accountability with one another to be more like Jesus. We practice commune because it is important for us to build each other up and to encourage one another to live on mission with Jesus.

**Connect** with at least one Christian friend once a week. Ask them how they are doing, ask how you can keep each other accountable (ex: this week I want to focus on obeying my parents) and ask how you can pray for one another.

**Invite** a friend or two from church to hang out with you. You can go on a socially distanced walk in your neighborhood, play in the park together or have a friend watch a movie with you via a streaming service watch party.

**Plan** a time this month for you and a fellow Christian friend to spread the peace of Christ. Both of you could write a letter of encouragement to someone, donate clothes or food to a homeless shelter, bake a treat to bring to a neighbor, etc.

## ACTS 2:42-47

*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.*

This passage gives us an example of a time when the Apostles were committed to living life with each other. Doesn't the Bible paint such a beautiful picture here? Use the space below to either journal about or draw a picture of your answer to these questions: What makes our friendships with fellow Christians so unique and special? How can communing with other Christians encourage nonbelievers to want to follow Jesus?

WONDER TIME





# COMMUNE ACTIVITIES

## Teamwork Toss

We can make sure we're looking out for each other by encouraging everyone in your circle of Christian friends to live on mission with Jesus. This game helps us understand that teamwork and accountability are important tools to keep us all on mission.

**The challenge** of the game is to keep the object from falling on the ground.

**Find** a soft object in your home (ex: a ball, a balloon or a stuffed animal).

**Players** will take turns tossing the object to different teammates.

**Work** as a team to communicate well, make eye contact before passing the object and encourage each other to keep the game going!

**For an added challenge**, play a listening game while you toss the object. First, pick a category. Then, the first person to toss the object must also list something in that category starting with the letter "A". The second person tossing must list an object starting with the letter "B" and so on.

## Commune With Family

At first, it may seem a little intimidating to reach out to a friend and ask them to commune with you. And that's ok! You can ease into practicing commune by starting with your family! Ask your parents, your siblings, or even extended family members to hop on a Zoom call, read the Bible with you, watch a movie together, or pray as a family. Starting the spiritual practice of commune with a family member can build your confidence to expand your practice to other Christ followers.

## Two Is Better Than One (Cup Tower)

God created us to want to be around other people. God also delights in us when we come together as Christians. (Matthew 18:20) Here's a game that shows us how two can be better than one:

**Find** disposable or plastic cups in your home.

**Instruct** one player to build a tower made out of the cups on their own in 30 seconds.

**Ask** another player be a helper. Set the timer for 30 seconds again and have both players help each other complete the challenge.

**Examine** the progress made between the two players vs. the one player.

## Peak and Pit

One important reason why we commune is so that we can be there for each other during difficult times and pray for our fellow Christians when we are struggling with something. Take time this month for you and a family member or friend to share a peak (highlight of your day) and a pit (hard part of your day). Then take turns praying for one another. This is something easy that you can do as a family during sabbath rest or dinner time.

# PRACTICES OF PEACE

## PAUSE

One day each week we Pause from our labors so that we can delight in Jesus (Matthew 11:28–30).

## EAT

When we Eat with others, we reflect the joyful hospitality of Jesus, elevating ordinary actions into an expression of Christ’s restorative kingdom (Mark 2:16–17).

## ASK

We Ask questions the way Jesus did, with a curious and compassionate posture, to spark rich, authentic spiritual conversations (Genesis 3:9).

## COMMUNE

We Commune with at least two other Christians, committing to a small community that shares the mission of Jesus (Hebrews 10:24–25).

## EXAMINE

We invite Jesus to Examine us daily through prayer and the reading of God’s word (John 15:5).



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