



Discussion Guide

Date: 8/9/2026

Sermon Title: Does being part of a church matter?

Scripture: Acts 2:42-47

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, thank you for calling us into your family. In a world that often feels uncertain, help us discover what truly anchors our lives. Open our hearts to your Word, to one another, and to the purpose you have given your church. May this conversation draw us closer to Christ and help us see that we matter and we belong. In Jesus' name, Amen.

BIG IDEA:

The church is more than a place we attend. Church is a people with a purpose. In a world where jobs change, families grow, and circumstances shift, God invites us to anchor our lives in a community shaped by the mission of Jesus.

OPENING QUESTIONS: Choose one of the following questions to start your group or class with.

1. Describe a time when someone showed you kindness before you believed you deserved it. How did that change your relationship with that person?
2. Think about a time when you felt like you truly belonged somewhere like a team, a neighborhood, a church, a family gathering. What made that experience feel like belonging rather than just attendance?

BACKGROUND: Understanding Acts 2:42–47

This passage describes the earliest Christian community shortly after Pentecost. The Holy Spirit had been poured out, thousands had come to faith, and the believers were learning what it meant to live as the people of God together. Notice that the church was not primarily defined by a building, a worship style, or an institution. It was defined by shared devotion, shared life, shared worship, and shared mission.

The four practices in verse 42:

1. The apostles' teaching – learning the story and way of Jesus.
2. Fellowship (koinonia) – deep participation in one another's lives.
3. The breaking of bread – meals, communion, and shared table life.
4. Prayers – a community dependent on God.

Luke then describes a church marked by generosity, worship, joy, and witness. Their life together became a testimony to the surrounding community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Read Acts 2:42-47 together. Use these questions to study the text.

Digging Into the Text

1. What words or phrases stand out to you in Acts 2:42-47?
2. Which of the four practices in verse 42 seems most life-giving to you right now? Why?
3. What evidence do you see that these believers were more than a crowd attending an event?
4. How did generosity become part of their witness?
5. What do you think “awe came upon everyone” (v.43) looked like in everyday life?

Personal Reflection

1. When have you felt most connected to the church?
2. What currently anchors your sense of identity and purpose?
3. How would you answer the question: “Why am I part of FUMCR?”
4. What gifts, passions, or experiences has God given you that could bless others?
5. Where do you sense God inviting you to move from attending to belonging?

For the Group

1. What would happen if every person in our church could clearly name our shared mission?
2. How does FUMCR help people Welcome, Grow, and Serve?
3. What would our community miss if FUMCR suddenly disappeared?
4. What practical step could our group take this month to help someone know: “You matter. You belong.”

SERMON QUESTIONS:

1. Pastor Clayton begins the sermon describing the church as a jigsaw puzzle where every person is an essential piece. In what ways have you experienced your own unique gifts and presence making a difference in a community of faith?
2. Pastor Clayton says, “a community can come together where every person senses a place of belonging this is what the church can be”. Have you found your church a place of belonging? Where have or haven’t you seen this as a place of belonging?
3. The early church in Acts devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, meaning they were eager to learn the story of Jesus. How intentional are you about continually deepening your understanding of who Jesus is and what he taught?
4. The Greek word *koinonia* describes a fellowship that goes beyond a consumer mindset of asking what the church can do for me. How might a shift from a consumer mentality to a contributor mentality change the way you engage with your church community?
5. The sermon suggests that both sharing a meal in someone’s home and participating in Holy Communion were seen as sacramental moments by the early church. How does the view of ordinary, everyday moments as potentially sacred change the way you approach your daily life?
6. The passage says the believers shared their resources so that no one among them had unmet needs. What does that kind of generosity look like in a practical, modern context? Does it feel realistic to you? Why or why not?

7. The sermon noted that someone once wrote about the early Christians, "Look at these Christians, how they love one another." If someone outside your church were to observe your congregation for a month, what do you think they would say about you?
8. The sermon ended with this statement: "You matter. Your life matters. And you have an important piece of the puzzle to share with the church, to make the church even more than it ever dreamed it could be." Do you genuinely believe that about yourself? What makes it easy or hard to believe?

A PRACTICE:

Ask each person to complete this sentence: "I am part of FUMCR because..."

Encourage participants to write their answers down and pray over it during the week. Ask if anyone would like to share there "why" now?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, thank you for calling us into your church. Forgive us when we treat your church as merely a place to visit rather than a family to belong to. Give us clarity about our purpose and courage to live it out. Help us become a community devoted to teaching, fellowship, prayer, generosity, and love. May our lives together point people to you so that many may discover that they matter, and they belong. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND:

Choose ONE of the following practices to focus on this week:

1. Pick one of the four practices from Acts 2:42 - teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, or prayer - and make a specific, intentional commitment to it this week. Share your choice with a group member for accountability.
2. Think of someone you know who does not have a church community. Pray for them by name this week. Consider whether there is a natural and genuine way to extend an invitation to them.
3. Identify someone in your church or small group who has a current need - practical, emotional, or spiritual. Take one concrete step to meet that need this week, not out of obligation, but out of the spirit of shared life together.
4. At the end of each day this week, take two or three minutes to ask yourself: where did I see God at work today? Write it down. Bring your observations to share with the group at your next meeting.
5. Extend goodwill. Do one act of visible, unexplained kindness for a neighbor, coworker, or stranger this week - not as a church program, but as a natural expression of who you are as a follower of Jesus.