

# BEST. YEAR. EVER.

## Week Four

### Opening Prayer

God, thank you for the gift of this series. Be with us today as we look at the connections in our lives and how those impact our relationships. Amen.

### Talk It Over

This week we wrapped up our series that has been all about heading into this year proactively looking to live our best year ever. It's important to understand this isn't about quick fixes or denying the challenges. Rather, the invitation extended in this series is about living intentionally in the areas that matter the most to us and taking healthy control in the areas of life we can control. This week we specifically looked at how we can live our best year ever relationally.

### **This week we looked at this big idea: We can have the best year ever, but we can't have it alone.**

As people, we often feel the pressure of being in control, being strong, and looking like we have it all together. As we look at scripture we see over and over again that God invites us into community. Healthy relationships within community is how we heal.

- What do you think of when you hear the word community?
- Do you identify as an introvert (fueled by spending time alone) or an extrovert (fueled by spending time with others)? How does this impact your relationship with community?
- Do you have a fun story around a time you tried to do a team building or community building exercise? If you feel comfortable, share about it.

### Read Genesis 2:18

This scripture shows us how much God values companionship, community, and relationships. He had created man, he said his creation was good, but he also said we need to be in relationship instead of alone.

- Thinking outside of a romantic relationship, name some examples where we know as humans, we need relationship.
- What are some of the results of navigating life in isolation?
- What are some of the results of navigating life in community?

### Read Luke 5:17-25

In this story we see community in action. We get a glimpse into those who can express hate or resistance, and we see healing happen, both physically and spiritually.

- Does your current community bring you closer to Jesus or take you away from him?
- How has community helped you heal both physically and spiritually?
- Do you have wounds that have kept you from engaging in community at a more vulnerable level? Share only what you feel comfortable sharing.
- Following up with the last question, are there ways you have overcome your wounds or ways you are working through them?

*(Content continued on the next page.)*

**This week we looked at three ways we can experience healthy community: Be available, be intentional, and be courageous enough to be carried.**

- Who has been available to you during a difficult time?
- Who are you currently making yourself available to? Feel free to describe your relationship to and with this person without naming them.
- Are there intentional ways and rhythms you have created community with your friends and family? Within your marriage or dating relationship?
- Is it easier or more difficult for you to be vulnerable and accept the help and support of community?
- Can you think of a person who helped to carry you or helped you get off your mat?

**This is more of a reflective question:** What would it take for you to let people into your life and into the difficulty or joys you experience? Take a minute to just sit with that question and then share any other thoughts around community and vulnerability you might have.

**This week's bottom line:** The path to our Best Year Ever relationally begins with moving from sitting in a row into a circle. At Eastlake Church, we are big on community and being a church that helps incircle those who are hurting and in need of support. A church community bonded together is strong enough to face whatever comes our way. The word 'church' is intended to refer to people and we practice connecting in our community through our growth groups and ministry teams.

**Read Matthew 18:16; Galatians 6:2 MSG**

- What are your desires for community in your life?
- Do you see how healthy community can change the way we live, grow, and heal?
- Is there someone you need to circle up around today?

**Closing Prayer**

**Option A**

If your group is comfortable spend this time circling up around each other and praying together for the needs you each have.

**Option B**

Read this prayer: God, we ask that you would remind us every day this week the ways we can be intentional, available, and vulnerable to the community around us. Thank you for the gift of community you have given us in this group.

-----

**How To Use this Discussion Guide**

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.