

Solitude & Fellowship

- [Voiceover] Men, you've got a lot to do. You wake up early, you stay late, you fix things, lots of things. You don't have time to meditate. What's the lotus position anyway? Who has time to journal or study Greek language when you're just trying to understand what your wife is saying? Men, this study is for you. An 8-Week Real Men series starting January 11th from Pastor Mark Driscoll in person at Trinity Church, Wednesdays at 6:30 or online at realfaith.com. Spiritual disciplines for regular guys.

- All right, best night of the week. Best place to be, best guys to be with. Amen. Welcome to Real Men. If you are a first time guy, you made a great choice. This is gonna be the day that alters the rest of your life in a good, healthy, godly direction. My name's Pastor Mark, one of the pastors here at the church. Thank you for joining us. You matter, your marriage matters, your kids matter, your grandkids matter, your businesses matter, your ministries matter, your lives matter, your struggles matter, your victories matter, your legacy matters. We're here because you matter, and you are a tremendous priority to me, and it's an honor to be with you. I wanna thank everybody who's joining us online as well. We've got men's groups gathering all over the world, watching Real Men, and if some of you guys ever make it to Scottsdale, come join us, we'd love to see you. Last week alone, our simulcast was 300% higher than anything we've ever put out. Men are tuning in around the world and what we like to say is we build men up to bless women and children. That's who we are, we're those guys. And I'm in a series now for you men, spiritual disciplines for regular guys. Many of you guys, you've got a lot of responsibilities. And the thing with being a man is this, it's always pouring out. You've got a job, you've got a wife, you've got kids, you've got ministry, you've got responsibilities, you've got obligations, you're trying to volunteer in your community. You men have all of these people in places to which you are pouring yourself out. And it causes men to get a little exhausted, frustrated, overwhelmed, grumpy, even jaded. And here's the good news. You have a father who loves you. You have a father who knows you. You have a father who cares for you and wants to help you. And our view of God is that he is father and we are sons. And what I like to say is this, before the father asks you to do anything, he wants you to prepare you to do everything. I've got three sons, I love 'em with all my heart, and I think they're all in the room tonight. I've got Godly awesome sons. And in the last week, I've met with every one of them individually. And it's like, "Okay, what are you working on? What responsibilities do you have? What plans are you making? What are you looking at for this year?" And as a dad, I wanna know what my boys have got in their heart and I wanna pray for 'em, and I wanna bless 'em and I wanna help 'em. What can I pray for? How can I help? Where can I serve? What can I give? If you wanna do something good, I'm your dad. I wanna be first in line to help you get that done.

- That's good.

- And God is your father, and he has a father's heart toward you, and he wants to meet with you, and he wants to pour into you and he wants to help you and bless you so that you can be the kind of man he's called you to be. And this is what we're talking about in the spiritual disciplines, how God the Father pours into you. And then as men, we get to pour out to others. So this is

kind of where we're going with this little series. Pouring in, you study, and we looked at pouring out his obedience this week. Solitude, get time with the Father to pour into you as his son. And then pouring out his fellowship, a relationship. We'll look at silence and listening and then pouring out and speaking. We'll look at how you pray, and God pours into you. And then you go do the things that God has called you to do that's pouring out. Sabbath is your day to rest and to recover, and God to pour into you. So the other six days of the week, you can pour out and work. Worship is where you get in God's presence and you're recovering and you're rejuvenated. And then evangelism is where you bring God's presence to someone else. Journaling is where you get time to talk to and hear from and process with the Lord. And service is where you go help others. And then last, fasting is where you take a break and feasting is where you celebrate. So we're looking over the course of these eight weeks at how God wants to pour into you and then you will be equipped and prepared by God to pour out into the people and things he's given to you. So today, I'm talking about solitude and fellowship. These would be our big ideas and fellowship is kind of the Bible's word for relationship. Before we get into the text, let me ask you this, how many of you guys are the introverts? Right? You're okay? They were hesitant to raise their hand. They're like, "I don't know. I don't know if I want people to know me." So how many of you guys are the extroverts, right? Woo, okay, so the extroverts showed up early, they're really excited. The introverts are not sure they're gonna stay. That's where we're at right now here in Real Men. And the difference between an introvert and an extrovert is this, not that you're good with people or bad with people, but whether you're energized or drained by people. An extrovert is energized by people. They're like, "I'm really tired, I'm having a hard day. I gotta find people. Let's get the guys, let's go out, let's do something." The introverts are like, "No." The introverts are like, "I'm exhausted, I'm tired. I'm gonna go hunting by myself. I'm gonna go into my man cave. I'm going to go for a hike in the woods. I just need some quiet time." And the difference is this, you can love people, but are you energized by them or drained by them? Okay, and if you're energized by people, you're gonna be stronger in what the Bible calls fellowship or relationship. You're gonna be all about relationships, hanging out with people, guys night out, going to games, hunting, fishing, loving every minute of it. That's gonna be you. And if you're more of an introvert, you're gonna be stronger on solitude, but the point is that we are gonna learn from each other in our discussions around the table. Each guy is gonna lean toward solitude more, the introverts, or fellowship more, the extroverts. And you gotta learn from and help one another, okay? Me? What do you think I am? Introvert, that's why we're not talking, I am. Okay, I do monologue, not dialogue. And tomorrow I will get in my Bronco, I will go to the woods, I will hike deep into the woods, far away from people, and then I'll recover. I love you guys with all my heart. It's my favorite night of the week and I'm gonna die tomorrow, okay? That just what's gonna happen. Because for me, I don't get energized by people. I get energized by solitude. When Grace and I, my wife and we first got married, how many of you, you're different than your wife, right? And at first it's cute and then it's annoying. Welcome to marriage, that's the way that it is. So when we first got married, Grace is a total extrovert. She's like, "Let's have people over, let's have more people over. Let's have people over for the holidays. Let's have people go on vacation with us." And I was like, "I wanna die. I don't, I can't, I can't, I can't. This is too many people." And then she would sort of judge me and think, "Well, you're not very loving, you're not very relational." And I would think,

"These are too many people and we don't get enough privacy." And so we were judging one another and when we learned to learn from one another. So I tell Grace, "Hey, if you were gonna have people over, you gotta let me know in advance. I gotta prepare for that, and then I need to schedule after they're gone, I need to go back up to the woods. You love people, I love deer. We've each got our way of figuring this out." And then Grace realized, "Yeah, I need to get more time with the Lord and I can't just spend all my time with people." So in our marriage, what originally was a little bit of a conflict, I think by God's grace, we've sort of sequenced it into a strength. She gets more time in solitude, I get more time in fellowship. We work it all out together. So that's what we're talking about. Let me start with solitude, this is where God pours into you. Solitude is fasting from people. There's different kinds of fast. There's fasting from food, there's a Sabbath, which is fasting from work. Solitude is fasting from people. It's getting a break. Matthew 14:23, I'm just gonna look at Jesus' life. He lived the perfect life. He's the most, he is the perfect man and he is the example of health. After Jesus dismissed the crowds, he went up to the mountain by himself to what? To pray. When evening came, he was there alone. How many of you guys, that's your new life verse. "All right, I'm gonna go up to the mountain. I'm gonna be alone." Mark 6:31, Jesus said to them, he says to his disciples, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place that solitude and rest a while, for many were coming and going and they had no leisure even to eat." Jesus men were so busy they didn't even get time to eat a meal. And Jesus tells his guys, we need to take a break before we break. You need to know this is a man. There's two ways to get a break. Take a break or break. Either way, you're gonna get a break. You either do it on a day off or you do it in a hospital bed. Luke 4:42, when it was day, Jesus departed and went to a desolate place. And then the last one, Jesus would withdraw. This was his habit to desolate places and pray. So solitude is where you sort of turn your phone off, get away from your relationships and get alone. But there's a big difference. This is really important. There's a big difference between solitude and isolation. What's the big difference between solitude and isolation? Yeah, whether you go to meet with God or you're just running from your problems. Men who are isolated are actually in grave danger. Have you ever seen a guy that you're like, he kind of just cut himself off? Like he's not answering the phone. We can't find him, he's not showing up at work, he's disappeared from church, we're not sure what he is doing. He's probably not doing good, maybe he's a little depressed, maybe he's self-medicating, maybe he's sort of hiding. That's not good. Isolation is different than solitude. Isolation is where you're hiding from God and people, solitude is where you're taking a break from people so you can spend more time with the Lord. And so ultimately, we all know guys that are isolated and those guys are in danger. They're not doing well. But solitude is where for a period, you're like, "You know what? I'm gonna not be with these people and I'm gonna go be with the Lord." My wife has learned this about me. She gets the best version of me when I get time with the Lord. So my wife used to argue with me and then she realized that doesn't work. So then she would tell me, "You need to go argue with the Lord." She'd say, "Mark, you just need a day. You need a day away." So she'll just tell me like, "I can't fix you. God will fix you. You're sort of grumpy. Go to the woods, talk to the Lord." And then she knows that I'll come back as a better version of myself. That's different than isolation. Isolation is where a guy is self-destructing. Solitude is where he's with the Lord and he's getting strengthened and built up. And so my wife has even realized now, the more time I get with the Lord, the better version of me comes home. And so

what can you do when you have solitude? How many of you guys just raise your... How many you guys think, "You know, actually, solitude is something I'm pretty good at. It's kind of a..." How many of you guys are like, "I've never even tried. You know, I'm busy at work, but I don't leave time for the Lord." What can you do when you're having solitude? Here's some practical things, you can worship. I dunno about you, I love to sing and I'm horrible at it. So I appreciate the speakers 'cause they overpower my voice. I love to sing, but I'm terrible at it. If you have solitude, you can sing and you can sing to the Lord and you don't need to need to be self-conscious about it. And between you and heaven is an autotune, by the time he gets to Jesus, you've said incredible. So I literally, I will hike in the woods. I tend to take a day, a week for solitude and I go hiking in the woods. That's what I like to do. And I'm not a guy who can just sit in my office all day like, "Oh, now it's prayer time and now it's worship time." I need to hike. So I like being active. And while I'm in the woods, sometimes I'll just start singing and it's just me and the deer and they don't care. And sometimes I'll just sing in the car and I just need, my soul just needs to sing. Other things you can do when you have , you can just pray. And for you guys that don't know how to pray, pray like this. Pray like God is your Father. We'll talk about this when we get into prayer. Jesus said, when you pray pray like this. Our Father, right? How many of you, you've got a son? Okay, does your son talk to you? Prayer is you talking to your dad. Prayer is how men talk to their father. So it's conversational. So again, when I have a solitude day and usually it's in the woods hiking, it'll be tomorrow, I will go for a walk and I'll just talk to God just out loud. I just talk to him, it's not super religious, there's no dearly belovedism, there's no beseeching. You know, there's no King James. It's just, "Hey father, I wanna talk to you about this." And I'll talk to him and I verbal process and I just talked to him. And to me, it's great. So what I've even started doing on my hikes, on my hike into the location, I pray things that I'm thankful and grateful for. And I find that if I start... So recently, I was planning on praying on the way into a lake, up in the mountains, everything I was grateful and thankful for. And then I was gonna pray on the way out some things that I needed. And I kid you not, I hiked into one lake and then I hiked to another lake, and then I turned around and hiked home, and I was still on the grateful and thankful prayers, hours. And it just, I was just like, "Oh my gosh, God has been good to me." And when I verbalized that, something in my soul just rejoices. And it's good, and if you've got a hard decision to make, get some solitude, talk to the father. You had a good day, go talk to the father. You had a bad day, you got a tough season, go for a walk, talk to the father. That's what you can do. Also too, I like to study. When you have solitude, you can study. How many of you, it's hard to read your Bible when the TV's on? It's impossible. Or the phone's on, you know, like I was reading and then I got a text and I was reading, I got a call and I was reading. Sometimes it's good just shut everything down. So you know what, I'm just gonna study now. And I'll tell you guys too, you may even pray about reading a book other than the Bible. Read the Bible, but pick another book. The average man reads how many books a year? Zero. You guys wanna go crazy, just get one book and you will be a unicorn, you'll be a man who reads. And whatever seems interesting to you, just read wherever you are, and study wherever you're interested. I don't care as long as you're learning about God. In addition, journaling is what you can do when you have science and solitude. And sometimes that's just, you know what? I just gotta think some stuff through. I gotta sketch out some plans. What does my son need? What does my daughter need? What does my wife need? What should we do this year?

You know, I got and and sometimes it's just like a strategic planning session with the Holy Spirit. Just think of things through. I live with a journal, I'm always journaling. We'll talk about that in the future week. But what solitude does, it leaves space and margin for some of the other spiritual disciplines. And then also solitude is a great thing to do on your sabbath day. Take your day off and maybe just shut your phone off. Maybe just be with your family, not everybody else, and figure out this is what we're gonna do for our day together. Now that being said, this is solitude and it's being with God, being in God's presence and God pouring into you and encouraging you and replenishing you and refreshing you so you can pour out. And the pouring out is fellowship. This is again the Bible's word for relationship. So I wanna look at a lot of scriptures. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. What does the Bible have to say about fellowship and pouring out? Genesis 2:18, it is not good that a man is alone, is alone. Guys, we are made for relationship. And here's what they found statistically, men who are not in relationship die. Die. Men who don't get married and live alone, they die much younger, right? Men who are alone are isolated and they die. We're made for relationship. It's not good to be alone. Jesus says, "Love your neighbor as yourself. That's relationship." I'll say this too, it comes to mind. I was reading a news story this week. Brand new clinical survey came out that just reminded me. They traced people over the course of 84 years, different economic backgrounds, different cultural backgrounds, different race, religious backgrounds. And they were trying to figure out what causes people to live shorter and longer lives. You know what they found? After a longitudinal study, 84 years, people that have the healthiest relationships live the longest lives. It doesn't matter how much money you make, it depends. It doesn't matter on what you have but who you spend your life with. It doesn't matter how much money you make, how much power you have. It doesn't matter whether or not you're formally educated. The joy and longevity of your life is predicated upon the quality of your relationships. What that means is like if you and God are good, you're gonna live longer. And if you and God are good and you and your wife are good, you're gonna live even longer. And you and God are good and you and your wife are good, and you and your kids are good, you're gonna live a really long time. The healthier you are relationally, the longer you're gonna live, period. And the less health problems. Many who have better relationships, they have found the longitudinal studies, less ulcers, less addictions, right? Less outbursts of anger, less heart problems, less stress-related illness. Because if this is good and we're good, I'm good. Love one another. Here's what Jesus says as well. Love one another as I have loved you. Love one another, by this all men will know that you're my disciples if you love one another. True or false, there's not a lot of love in our world. There's not a lot of love. When we love each other, it's a witness. And I'll give you guys a really encouraging example. I talked to a guy came to Real Men last week for the very first time, not a Christian. Says he is not a Christian. He showed up and here's what he said. He said, "You guys are talking all the time about Jesus and I heard there's a bunch of men." He said, "I wanted to show up and see it for myself." I was like, "What'd you think?" He's like, "I've never seen anything like that in my whole life." He's like, "I've never seen a room of men that they actually care about each other." He said, "I've never been in a room where I thought the men cared about me." I said, "What did the guys do at the end?" He said, "They listened." He said, "Then at the end they asked if they could pray over me." I said, "What'd they do?" He said, "They prayed over me." I said, "Well how did that feel?" He said, "It was really strange." He's like, "I've never walked into a room with men, felt loved and wanted to

be prayed for." I said, "Well how'd it feel?" He said, "I felt like those guys really love me." I said, "They do." And I said, "You know why they do? Because their father loves you and those are his sons." See how many of you guys even walking in here when we love one another, when we have a conversation around the table here in a minute, when we pray for each other, how many of you guys walk out and just feel like, "You know what? That was a good use of my time right there." There were men who loved each other and we kind of got to see what the disciples are like. And so we want this to be this counter-cultural place where out there men get beat up, here, they get built up. Out there, men get attacked, here, they get encouraged. Out there, men need to fake how they're doing, here, men get to be real about where they're at. And we're here to love one another and help one another and encourage one another 'cause our father is a good father and we wanna be good brothers. Other things, Jesus says, well here's Acts 2, the early church, they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, so they're learning the Bible and to fellowship and to chicken wings or breaking of bread in prayer. And so I would say that's important. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. See we're brothers and we do love each other. You guys need to know we don't love each other like women love each other. We love each other like brothers love each other, like fathers love sons. If we walk in the light, let's just being open and honest. That's why we call it Real Men, not perfect men, not religious men. It's Real Men. Walk in the light. Okay, here's what's going on. As he is in the light, we have fellowship. As we're honest around the table, we actually get to know each other. "Okay, you're having a good day, great, you're having a bad day, I'm here to help." And the blood of Jesus purifies us from sin. Last one, let us not give up meeting together. I just encourage you guys, we have mens every week, we have church every weekend. Don't give up on meeting. See what happens is you're gonna get isolated and that's not gonna be good for you. So what we're doing right here is fellowship. This is where the fellows get together, as some are in the habit of doing. Let us encourage one another. And all the more, as you see the day approaching, what Jesus tells us and what Hebrews echoes is that as we get further into human history, things get darker and and evolution is a lie. The opposite is true. It's not getting better, it's getting worse. We're not evolving into more loving, helpful people. We're devolving into more unloving and harmful people. The world is a more dangerous place than it was, and I'm just telling you, the days are getting darker. So as the days are getting darker, you gotta find your guys, you gotta find your brothers. Like, "Okay, who are the guys? They care about me. I care about them. I'll pray for them. They'll pray for me. If I have a good day, they'll rejoice with me. If I have a bad day, they're gonna walk with me. And I'm gonna do the same for them. Where's my brothers for the battle?" I always like to say, "You get your crew before your crisis, right?" Figure out who your guys are before your battle comes. And what it's saying is, as the days get darker, we need each other more. And how many of you guys, you rarely walk into a room like this. You guys go to work, maybe you go to your kids' school, you go to your kids' sporting events, you go to your activities, you go to the doctor, everywhere you go, how many of you, you walk in that room and you feel like this is not really my people. I love them, but these aren't my people. Then you walk into here, guess what? You found your people, you found your brothers, you found the guys who think like you and wanna walk with Jesus and walk with you. And what he's saying is as things get darker, this is more important. That's what fellowship is. I'll say a couple of things about this as well. Number one, you can't obey the Bible by yourself because most of what the Bible is, is

written to communities of people and telling them how to do relationships with each other. So if you're a guy, you're like, "I don't need relationships, I just need the Bible." Well, it's written to groups of people talking about how they need each other. And so we believe that the best way to be biblical is to be relational 'cause the Bible tells us how to do relationship with God and each other. In addition, our God is a relational God. One God, three persons, Trinity, father, son, and Spirit. Our God does not do life alone. And our God says it's not good when his men try to do life alone. I wanna honor you men for being here. This is a fellowship, this is a fellowship. This is a brotherhood. I hope and pray by God's grace it becomes a movement. The whole world needs this and men need this desperately. And so ultimately, solitude is you during the week saying, "Okay, I'm gonna go get with the Father. And fellowship is I'm gonna get with the brothers." And the truth is, you need time with the Father and you need time with the brothers. Solitude is time with the father. Fellowship is time with the brothers. Am I making sense? It's the only way to be a healthy man. Now that being said, I want to talk about Jesus as our perfect example and how he practiced fellowship or relationship. And first of all, Jesus spent time with God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit, right? They're in constant union and communion relationship. John the beloved, lemme say this, John the beloved is Jesus best friend. Okay? Best friend. You gotta figure out who's the guy or small group of guys that you really trust and can depend on. So John is called the one whom Jesus loved. They were best friends. At the last Supper, John's sitting next to Jesus 'cause they're best friends. If Jesus needed a friend, we all need a friend. If Jesus needed a brother he could count on. We all need a brother we can count on. I'm blessed to have some really great extraordinary men in my life. I'd say perhaps my nearest and dearest friend who's walked with me through a lot of hardship. He's coming into town on Friday, really excited to see him. I'm gonna pick him up and we're gonna hang out for the week and he's gonna be around and he's like, he's my brother man like literally brother. And sometimes in a religious setting like this, how you doing brother? And it's kind of that religious Ned Flanders smarmyism, you know, you're like, "I'm not your brother and if we are brothers, I'm gonna give you a wedgie." Because you're a brother like that, there's a religious form of, "How you doing brother?" And then there's a real genuine form of, "We are brothers 'cause we've been both adopted by the same father. We've been adopted by the same father and he's made us brothers." And this guy for me is, he's a dear friend. I mean I love him, I love his wife. And I'll say this too, I didn't have this in my notes. Here's one of the shocking things that a man told me recently about real men. He said, "I've never been in a room where the guys tell each other they love each other." You know what guys? We do tell each other we love each other 'cause we do love each other. And then he said, "And I've never seen men that big with beards that long and trucks that lifted saying they loved each other." Welcome to heterosexual brotherly love. Amen. We do stay in our gender lane. If you've not noticed, we stay very clearly in our gender lane. We don't even put our blinker on. But there is a masculine, healthy way to love each other like brothers. And some of you guys had that when you're in the military. You've not had it since. Some of you guys had that when you're on a sports team or on a work crew, we want you to have that as God's men in God's house. So Jesus has relationship with God, relationship with his best friend John, and then he is got a couple of guys he can really count on. These would be like his friend group, his buddies, these would be the guys he's going hunting with, going fishing with, hanging out with, He is gonna watch the Super Bowl with, Peter, James, and John. And

these are the inner circle of three. They were there at the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah showed up. They were there when Jairus' little daughter was brought back to life. And they were there with him in the Garden of Yosemite before he died. Let me explain this. So Jesus has his relationship with God and then he's got his buddy John, and then he's got Peter, James, and John. And sometimes men will say this, and it sounds religious, but it's actually false teaching. Men will say, "I don't need a lot of brothers. I just, I'm good with God." Me and God were good God. God told Adam before sin entered the world and everything was good. One thing was not good, him to be alone. If Adam was without sin and had a perfect relationship with God and needed relationship, we all need relationship. So Jesus comes to earth, he has a relationship with the Father and the spirit relationship with God. He's got his best friend, John, Peter, James, and John, these would be like his closest buddies. Jesus comes to earth, he could pick anybody to be his buddies. He picks Peter, James, and John. They get access to him when other people don't. You need to think about how's my relationship with God? That's your solitude day. And then fellowship, "Is there a guy that I can depend on and is there a guy that can depend on me?" The best way to have a good friend is to be a good friend. The best way for a guy to be able to count on you is for you to be able to count on him and you serve each other. So Jesus has these three. The question is like, who are the guys that... What if something good happens, I'm gonna call them, something bad happens, I'm gonna let them know and they can count on me and I can count on them. That's what we're trying to do here. We're trying to create a place where you can find your John. We're trying to create a place where you can find your Peter, James and John. We want you to keep coming and jump from one table to the next if it doesn't work and just find the guys that are like, "Oh, those are my guys. I wanna get to know those guys. I wanna do life with those guys. I wanna pray with those guys. I wanna be brothers with those guys." And then Jesus has another friend group, Mary, Martha and Lazarus for example in John 11. So Jesus has a guy, Lazarus, who's got two sisters, Mary and Martha, and they live together. And when Jesus is traveling, guess where he stays? He stays at their house. You know why? They're friends. These women are like sisters. And a lot of times as men, we have a hard time like with their, "Okay, I get the brothers, but what do I do with the women?" Sister is the category the Bible gives. Sister is how you have fellowship with a female. The Bible says to treat younger women like sisters. How many of you have had a sister? So you can have a healthy friendship, non-sexual, non-flirtatious, not inappropriate, not crossing boundaries, that includes men and women as brothers and sisters. So Jesus is friends with Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Sometimes he goes to their house for dinner and they feed him and they hang out with him and they encourage him and they pray for him. And this is his friend group that's part of his fellowship. You can have that as well. Grace and I, for example, we have couples that we know and we love and they're friends of ours. We love the men like brothers. We love the women like sisters. There's nothing inappropriate or crossing any emotional or physical boundaries. But we love them and they love us and they're friends of ours. And sometimes we go out for a meal or a double date. We recently had a double date with a dear friend of ours that we love very much. We've known for a long time and we got done. We jumped in the car, we're driving home, and Grace was like, "I just love them." I was like, "I do too." And she's like, "That was so fun to hang out with them for a double date." Yeah, it really was. It's just life giving. Jesus had that kind of relationship with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. And

then Jesus has his disciples, he's got 12 guys. And these are more the guys that he's gonna pick to invest in. This would be kind of like maybe the guys at your table. It's the small group. They're praying together, they're studying together, they're learning together, and they're ultimately serving together. So he's got his relationship with God, he's got John, he's got his buddies, Peter, James and John. He's got some male and female friendships that are healthy and appropriate, Lazarus, Martha, Mary. And then he's got 12 guys, kind of a bigger circle of guys that he does life in relationship with. And then beyond that, we hear of the 72. This is a larger group that Jesus knows and he deploys them from ministry. So there's gonna be group of you're gonna know... If you hang out at this church for any period of time, at some point you're gonna know 72 people on a first name basis. It could take a while unless you're the extrovert. And then you're already probably there. And we're only in week two, congratulations. You get to be a greeter, you're ready to go. If you're an extroverted guy, you're gonna get to know 72 people in church pretty quick. If you're an introvert, your wife will help you, but you'll get there eventually. Okay? And then Jesus has a group of 120. These are the first Christians that meet in the early church and then ultimately there are multitudes. So Jesus sometimes has crowds of thousands come out. It says that he preached and there were five on one occasion, 5,000 men plus the women and the children. That's 10, 15, 20,000 people. So you look at Jesus fellowship, it's him and the Lord, friend, three buddies, healthy relationship with some males and females, twelve, seventy two, hundred and twenty, thousands. And the point is this, he has fellowship at multiple levels and there's a difference between fellowship and friendship. Did Jesus have 10,000 friends? You can't have 10,000 friends. You can't have 120 close friends. You can't have 72 close friends. You can't have, I mean, maybe you can have 12 close friends if you're really an extrovert. You could have three close friends. You can have one really near and dear friend. If you're married, I hope and pray that's your wife. I hope she's your nearest and dearest friend, mine is. But the point is this, I wanna close with this, fellowship is this. Be friendly, be friendly toward all, be friends with a few. Be friendly toward all and be friends with a few. And some of you guys are like, "Well how do I make friends?" Proverb says, "If you wanna have friends, be friendly." Friendly guys tend to have friends. I love you guys with all my heart. This is such an honor and encouragement. I look forward to this every week. And I can never go to bed on Wednesday night, 'cause I'm so excited about what God is doing in your life. And I would just ask you, as you go into table talk, have some fellowship and talk about and pray about these things. Number one, are you better at solitude or fellowship? And you guys need to learn from each other, right? You introverts, you're like, "I can teach you how to do solitude." You extroverts, you're like, "All right, we're going out for chicken wings." Okay? Number two, what difference has being at the table with the men made for you? And if you're a new guy, you don't have to answer that, but just even showing up and saying, "You know what? There are some guys that the father loves and they're my brothers, and I'm getting to know them." It's healthy and it's good. And then number three, how can we pray for you? And if you're new, the way we do it, and we borrowed this for my friend, Pastor Darien, and he's done men's ministry in the valley for a long time. We built this on his model. But what we like to do is what happens in sports, you guys ever been in a huddle? You huddle up. Before we leave, we like to huddle up and we like to make sure that every guys prayed for. How powerful is it when this many men, hundreds of men, I dunno where we're at tonight, we were at 350 men last week for our weekly

regular Bible study. People always ask me, they're like, "Oh, is that your annual men's conference?" "No, that's our weekly men's conference." Because we don't think that men just need an event, we think that men need relationships. An event can get you motivated, but brothers, for the walk, that's going to be the most helpful. And so we wanna make sure before you go, that somebody listens to you because you matter and somebody prays for you because you matter. And if you feel awkward or weird about that, that's okay. We're awkward weird guys. That's just how we roll. Okay? So here's what I wanna tell you guys. We are here to present to the world a masculine, strong, courageous, unified, humble brotherhood. Amen.

- Amen.

- I'm proud of you guys, and I love you with all my heart. Thanks for being here. I'm gonna pray and we'll give you extra time around the tables to fellowship. Father, thank you that you are a father. Thank you that you sent your son and our big brother, Jesus, to live without sin, to die for our sin, to rise as our savior. Thank you, father, that you have adopted us into your family as your sons, and thank you that you've made us into a brotherhood. Thank you that it's a good thing to be a man. Thank you that you made us as men. You made us to love as men. You made us to lead as men. And God, as we've been talking about with the leaders, we don't wanna just be good men, we wanna be good at being men. The world has some good men, but we wanna be good at being men. And part of that Lord is getting time with our Father to hear, to listen, to be poured into from our dad. And then part of that is fellowship, relationship, loving, serving, blessing others around us. Holy Spirit, I pray for a sonship anointing on the conversations at the table. I'm reminded of Paul's words that, that you have poured out the spirit of sonship on us. That you are a father, that we are your sons. And I pray that the conversations would be encouraging and uplifting and clarifying and helpful. And I pray Holy Spirit, for a double anointing on the prayer time tonight, that the guys would have a freedom to pray for each other and to share what they need prayers for. And God, I pray when the men leave here, they would feel poured into. And Holy Spirit, we invite you to do that now in Jesus' name, Amen. Love you guys, thanks.