

The Rhythm of Connect Personal Study

*Adapted from the Rhythms of Renewal Study Guide

[Watch this video from Rebekah Lyons on Connect](#)

Challenge - Write down three connections that you want to deepen using the rhythms of connection (found in Chapters 15-21) Ask at least one trusted friend to pray for you, hold you accountable, and cheer you on as you work to establish those rhythms in your relationships.

My Three Connections are:

Once we have begun to learn how to rest & restore, our heart, mind and soul will come back to life and have something to offer the world around us. Once we are filled up, we have a renewed energy and perspective that is awakened to God's purpose for our life. Being filled up isn't just for our benefit, but also for the benefit of those around us. Spiritual community and cultural renewal can only happen when we look outside ourselves and engage with others from a full heart. Our relationships with our friends, family, and community thrive.

- ***Why do we need the input rhythms of rest and restore before we can connect in meaningful ways?***
- ***How might our relationships suffer if we do not practice the input rhythms?***
- ***Do you have meaningful connections in your life that help you maintain spiritual and mental health? If not what hinders you from having those connections?***

REFLECT: Spend some time this week meditating on these scriptures. Read them slowly, thoughtfully, silently, and reflect on what these scriptures have to say about how our relationships should be. Ask God to reveal specific relationships to you that need your attention. As names of specific people come to you, read the scriptures again with that person in mind and write down what you hear God telling you regarding that specific relationship:

Hebrews 10:23-25, Colossians 3:12-14, John 15:12-13

- ***What do these passages teach us about connection?***

We were created for connection, but genuine life-giving connection takes: **WORK, PLANNING, COURAGE & COMMITMENT**

- ***Which of these four is the biggest struggle for you in building relationships?***
- ***What steps can you take to overcome these struggles as you pursue deeper relationships in the future?***

"We avoid human connection because we have so much going on, even though it is the thing we need more than anything."

Prayer for the Week:

God, I ask you to help me evaluate the relationships I have currently and help me to know what relationships I need to invest more in. Give me wisdom and clarity on how to pursue deeper more meaningful connections in my life. Thank you for all the relationships that you have given me, may I never take them for granted. Help me to prioritize relationships over tasks. Help me to be quick to humble myself, to apologize and to show grace in my relationships. Give me courage to lead with vulnerability and give me the strength to help my friends and family carry their loads. Amen

Be the Friend You Wish To Have - Initiate Friendship

Friendships are not easy... sometimes we let a few bad experiences shape our outlook on friendship and we might even abandon the idea that we can have rich meaningful friendships in our lives. One of the keys to developing deep friendships is by being the friend you wish to have. Take a minute to evaluate your friendships, ask yourself these honest questions:

- Do you strive to be vulnerable and authentic in your friendships or do you shy away from vulnerability?
- Do you tend to keep conversations shallow with friends or are you quick to go deep?
- Do you easily extend forgiveness in your friendships or do you tend to hold grudges?
- Do you trust that God has placed some specific people in your life?
 - Why might these people be in your life?
 - Is there someone in your life right now that you need to connect with on a deeper level?

To foster these types of friendships, we have to be consistent, trustworthy and authentic. We have to let down our wall and look for opportunities to go deeper. We need to be open to who God puts in our path and make space for what He might have in mind.

- ***What do you look for in a good friendship, and how can you seek to be that kind of friend to others?***
- ***What changes might you need to make to be this kind of friend?***
- ***Are there some practical ways that you can pursue these types of friendships this week?***

"If we want a trusted friend, we need to be trustworthy."

Lead with Vulnerability - Better Together

Being authentic and vulnerable in relationships can be challenging, because we can't always trust those we choose to open ourselves up to. Author Brene' Brown says, *"Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It's about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen."* As we start to open ourselves up, we learn to be thoughtful about what to share, when to share, and with whom to share. Vulnerability with the wrong people fosters feelings of inferiority and judgment, vulnerability with the right people brings trust, bolsters our feelings of love and brings hope. You will know the right people when they reflect God's love back to you and point you toward Jesus. The enemy of our soul wants us to be isolated and alone, so he doesn't want us to pursue these kind of life-giving relationships. When we are alone and vulnerable, we feel afraid. When we're together and vulnerable, we become brave.

- ***Why is being vulnerable and transparent essential for a deep and meaningful relationship?***
- ***What are hindrances to vulnerability and how can we overcome those?***
- ***What is one thing that you can share with someone this week that might open the door to a more meaningful conversation?***

*"Transparency is sharing where you have been;
vulnerability is sharing where you are right now."*

Open-Porch Policy – Potluck over Perfect

Creating a sustainable culture of hospitality requires casual frequency, getting together often, coming as you are, hosting as you are. We often make this way more complicated than it has to be. We need to be ok inviting people into our homes with no expectation of providing a restaurant quality meal and a spotless home. They will likely feel more welcomed and comfortable to be themselves if you invite them into your less than perfect home. Embracing connection over perfection lifts our spirits and encourages our friends.

- ***Who is the most hospitable person you know and what characteristics do they have?***
- ***Do you have an “open door/porch policy” in your home?***
- ***What is one way you could begin to extend hospitality to someone this week?***

“We have replaced face-to-face relationships with conversations online.”

Bear Each Other’s Burdens – Carry the Load

All throughout the New Testament, it talks about the sacred joy and privilege of being a part of a community that is a connected body of believers called to bear with one another. We are to be like parts of the human body, each belonging to the other. We are to be a family of faith who carry one another’s burdens.

Read the following scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, Romans 12, Galatians 6:2

- ***What can we learn from these words to strengthen our relationships?***
- ***What do these verses have to say about bearing with one another?***

We were made to process our pain and sadness with one another. Many people will not open their hearts and lives up to us until we do that for them. Sometimes we have to go first. As you share your burden with someone, you can then invite them to share their burden with you.

REFLECT: Take a minute to think about a burden you are carrying right now, write down the burden below and ask God to reveal who you should share that burden with. Make a plan this week to boldly go first in vulnerability and share this burden with that friend. Ask them to listen, pray for you, and encourage and support you.

- **Can you think of someone carrying a heavy burden right now? How can you reach out to them this week and help them lighten their load?**

*"We weren't designed to bear our fears, anxieties, and worries on our own.
Walk through hard times together."*

Hugs all Around - The Power of Physical Touch

All of us need physical touch. We were made for connection, and when feeling of loneliness, isolation and depression start to creep in, our bodies long for touch more than ever. Hugs are proven to promote feelings of contentment and reduce anxiety and stress. Not everyone is a hugger, but reaching for the hand of a friend or offering a reassuring touch can sometimes communicate better than words. In scripture we see that Jesus knew the power of touch, he used touch to heal and to give and receive blessing. If the life of Jesus is any indication, physical touch can be a gateway to healing, blessing, and connection with others and God.

- **What is your preferred way to use physical touch to connect with a friend? A hug, high five, pat on the back?**
- **Do you remember the last hug or meaningful physical touch you received? How did it make you feel?**
- **Who in your life needs physical touch this week? Find a way to give it to them this week.**

"It is common, normal and easy to avoid relating to people. The problem is we will never experience full connection if we do this."

Marriage Retreat - Love the One You're With

Our deepest connection in life, if we have the opportunity to experience it, should be with our partner in marriage. But day after day, we get into the same routines, deal with the same bad habits, overreact to the same habitual patterns, offer the same apologies... and get into a crazy cycle of being out of sync. How do we move from maintenance to abundance? Author Emerson Eggerichs says this about marriage relationships *"His love motivates her respect; her respect motivates his love."* Men need respect and women need love. When that love and respect cycle is enacted in a marital relationship, incredible fruit abounds. It's important that we focus on ways to stay connected, guard our alone time with our spouse and let no conflict go unresolved. If we can offer honest dialogue and hear each other with humility, we can learn to keep bitterness and resentment at bay.

- **What are some ways that you might “disrespect” your husband?**
- **What is a way you can show respect toward him this week?**
- **Do you have a regular daily check in time with your spouse? If not, try to establish one this week and see if you feel more connected.**

“When we let relationships interrupt our lives, that’s when we are starting to build true community and connection.”

Apologize First – Time is Short

One of the biggest roadblocks to meaningful connection is unresolved conflict and brokenness that has not been healed. There is real freedom in owning your part in conflict and apologizing. You can’t control the other person’s reaction, but you can control your actions. Your example may be just what is needed for the relationship to move forward. If they don’t reciprocate, you can move forward knowing that you sought out restoration in the relationship.

REFLECT: Ask God to reveal someone in your life that you have unresolved conflict or brokenness with. This week, take time to listen to worship music and pray with that specific person and relationship in mind. Record what God reveals to you in that time of worship and prayer about where you have possibly been wrong, resistant, prideful or out of line in any way.

- **What can you own in this broken relationship?**
- **Is it possible for you to apologize for your part in the conflict and ask for forgiveness, even if they don’t do the same?**
- **What keeps you from going first in conflict resolution?**
- **What can you do to extend the grace that God has given you through Jesus to others?**
- **Ask God to show you people that you might need to rekindle relationships with.**

“The best response when connection is broken is not to push away, but rather the opposite to pull in.”