

THE STARTING PLACE

Take a moment to see how many sentences you can make that include the word *community*. What does this tell us about how flexible the word is, and about the many different ways it can be used?

LISTENING TO ACTS

Read [Acts 1:6–14](#) as Jesus ascends, he promises them that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon them; and then build communities in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. As you read, keep an eye out for every sign that they are already acting as a community rather than as separate individuals.

LISTENING TO THE GOSPEL

In Acts Jesus is leaving the disciples without his physical presence. Some six weeks earlier, on the night before his arrest, Jesus had prayed for his disciples. As you read [John 17:1–11](#), trace the relationships that are named in the passage. Who belongs to whom, and how are those relationships connected?

LISTENING TO PETER

Read 1 Peter 5:6–11 below. As you read, note the habits Peter encourages for the life of this community. You might like to use a highlighter pen.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

THE THRESHOLD

John shows Jesus praying for their unity, and Acts shows that unity taking root. In 1 Peter, the habits you noted describe how that shared life is lived. What do these habits show about the paradox that the community becomes strong precisely as it learns to depend on God?

MOVING FORWARD

In this spring season, is there a particular habit you noted in 1 Peter that stirs something in you? What might you nurture, and what might you prune back, in response?

A Prayer for this Week

No wonder when Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, he begins, “Our Father in heaven,” not “My Father.” In that word “our” we hear a people held together before God, learning humility, bringing their anxieties to him, and depending on his care. It is the same life Peter describes: a community shaped by trust in God, and strengthened not by itself but by him. And so, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME.

YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN.

GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

FORGIVE US OUR SINS AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

FOR THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY
ARE YOURS NOW AND FOR EVER. AMEN.

The final ABIDE groups at the Vicarage are this week

WEDNESDAY 20TH MAY AT 7PM

FRIDAY 23RD MAY AT 10.30AM