



Uncommon Community | Shawn Johnson | 09.22.2024

Weekly Study

## SHARE

As group members get settled, take a few minutes to check in with everyone and see how life is going. Share an exciting story from this week, your highs and lows, an answered prayer, or something you're struggling with. If someone is really struggling, rally the group around them and take a few moments to pray over them.

- **Share a high and a low from last week.**
- **Which ESPN step is strongest in your life? Which one needs more development? Explain.**

## GROW

Welcome to week three of our *Uncommon* series. At Red Rocks Church, we believe God calls us to live uncommon lives on purpose, so that together, we can go change the world. Nothing about life with God should be common because we do not serve a common God. If we want to step into our uncommon calling, we have to set ourselves apart from common things.

In Shawn's week three message, we were challenged to embrace *Uncommon Community*, intentionally confronting the epidemic of loneliness plaguing our society. The early church in Acts serves as our model, growing from 120 to tens of thousands while maintaining close-knit relationships. We're reminded that God's plan for us involves both large gatherings for worship and small groups for fellowship. The key elements of these small groups - encouragement, scripture, prayer, and 'next steps' - form the acronym ESPN, giving us a memorable framework for fostering genuine connections.

As we dive deeper into these elements, we're urged to be vulnerable, to share our burdens, and to actively engage in each other's spiritual growth. This message challenges us to move beyond surface-level interactions and embrace the transformative power of authentic Christian community.

### **Read Acts 2:42-47**

- **What was your takeaway from Shawn's message? Explain.**
- **Take some time as a group to reflect on Acts 2:42-47. Where do you see ESPN incorporated into the early church?**
- **How does your group Practice ESPN when you gather and throughout the week? What are you missing out on? What do you need to adjust? Explain.**

## MOVE

This week marks the launch of dozens of new groups, with hundreds more continuing to meet. It's the perfect opportunity to reinforce the vision, values, and foundational principles for your group and its members. The book of Acts provides profound insight as to why we believe in the power of Life Groups (notice how we didn't say "Bible study groups" or "social groups").

For the early church, building a transformative community went beyond merely alleviating loneliness with social interactions—a function any common group could serve—because they knew our deepest needs were far more extensive. Instead, they took the uncommon route,

anchoring their gatherings in their faith. This established a foundation where believers didn't just share life together; they shared it with Jesus.

Additionally, these early believers didn't merely gather to study scripture to check a religious box or justify the current condition of their life—a sharp contrast from the scribes and Pharisees who were well-versed in the scriptures, yet completely lacked compassion for people. Instead, they chose an uncommon way of life, devoting themselves not just to understanding the teachings of Jesus but to the wholehearted practice of His teachings in their daily life. They didn't use church and life groups to justify the condition of their life; they used church and life groups to transform it.

We share this not to shame or condemn you and your group, but to remind you of the profound impact God can have through the devotion of a few people. His presence is powerfully evident when we gather together with consistency, encourage each other relentlessly, immerse ourselves in the living, breathing Word of God intentionally, pray together with expectancy, and embrace our calling to BE THE CHURCH purposefully. This commitment should extend beyond Sunday services and small group meetings as we use ordinary, everyday moments to become the tangible love of Jesus to those around us.

### **Read James 1:22-25**

- **What is your takeaway from the passage and scripture above? Explain.**
- **Do you use church and life group to justify your life, or do you allow them to transform your life? Explain.**

### **Read Romans 12:9-15 NIV**

- **How do you want your group to be “devoted to one another in love?” How are you personally devoted to others in love? Explain.**
- **Think about what you desire most from your friendships/relationships. What are those things?**
- **Do the people in your life know that you need/expect those things from them? How has a lack of vulnerability/honesty with those closest to you kept you from what you needed most?**
- **Do you offer the same amount of devotion to others that you expect from them? If there's an imbalance, what does that reveal to you that you can work on?**

## P R A Y

Spend the next 5-10 minutes praying about what ESPN should look like in your group, how it could benefit you, and how you can engage and contribute to that process. When you're done, come back together as a group and spend some time intentionally building your culture.

1. What kind of encouragement do people need in this season of their life?
2. How are you going to incorporate encouragement into your life group, both during meetings and outside of meetings?
3. What will studying scripture look like in your group?
4. How can people show up prepared to do this?
5. How would you like people to engage during group time?
6. What kind of prayer do people need in this season of life?
7. How are you going to incorporate prayer into your group?
8. **IMPORTANT!** What do the next steps look like for your group? If you're in church one hour a week and in a group for one hour a week, you have 166 hours left. How will you encourage each other, pray for each other, love each other, show up for each other, and do life together during those 166 hours? Make a plan for this.