**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: Shallow - Commitment**

 **February 14, 2021**

**Introduction (8 min)**

Table Talk Groups (45 minute study) begin by watching the video and sharing the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

Southside Home (35 minute study) can skip to “Starting the Discussion” as a follow up to the worship experience.

**Table Talk Video: Shallow - Commitment**

Very often, pastors move a lot in the beginning of their ministry. Ashley and I lived in 5 different homes in the first 8 years of our marriage. The good news is we don’t plan to move again anytime soon!

Our first home was a tri-plex. We tried to get to know our neighbors, especially since you could often hear them through the walls, but since we only lived there a few months the relationships were shallow and we didn’t stay in touch after we moved. Our second home was a townhouse in Kansas City. It was a rough neighborhood and we barely even met our neighbors other than the people I already knew who lived there to attend seminary. Then we moved to northern Virginia and lived in a trailer for 3 months while house hunting. We only met one neighbor and I forgot his name between the driveway and front door. I never saw him again in three months.

Finally we moved to Maurertown, Virginia and bought a house. We stayed there for five and a half years. The relationships we had with our neighbors (we knew them all by name) was night and day different than anywhere else we had lived. Our neighbors across the street became our best friends and hosted a small group in their home. Other neighbors became good friends and we cared for each other’s houses and pets when on vacation and shared meals in each other’s homes. Our kids played together. We shoveled each other’s driveways. We helped set up each other’s Christmas lights. We had long talks around a fire pit with s’mores. It was wonderful.

One of the difficulties of frequent moves is that it makes it hard to build deep friendships. Friendships take time. There is a process for getting to know someone, learning to trust someone, and going through some stuff together that lets you know this friendship is going to last. It’s hard to do that in a short time. From my experience, it takes 2 to 3 years to build a pretty solid friendship that moves past all the pretense and awkwardness to the point where you are truly comfortable, transparent, and trusting of one another. It may take some time to build relationships but you were created for this and it is so completely worth it!

- Pastor Reggie Phillips

**Prayer (2 minutes)**

Dear God, help us today to understand our need for deep relationships and give us insight into anything standing in the way. May your Word show us a clear path forward into the healthy relationships you want us to enjoy. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**Starting the Discussion (3 minutes)**

1. Have you been surprised by a relationship that has become deeper over the last year?

**Unfolding the Biblical Story (24 minutes)**

**Invite someone to read Genesis 1:26-27**

1. God said let us create mankind in our image. How are relationships essential to the nature or character of God?
2. If we are made in God’s image and likeness, what kind of relationships are we created for?
3. Our relationships reveal a lot of truth about our character. What might your closest relationships reveal about you?

**Read Genesis 2:18-20**

1. God created us to be in relationships, but our sinful nature sometimes rebels against that. When are you most tempted to pull away from other people?
2. God allowed Adam to recognize his need – no suitable helper was found. How has God allowed you to see your need for deep and meaningful relationships recently?

**Invite someone to read Genesis 2:25**

1. A natural consequence to sin is shame and it hinders deep connection in relationships. What shame do you carry that is damaging a relationship in your life?
2. What steps can you begin to take right now to find healing from the shame and restoration in that relationship? What help do you need to make that happen?

**Read 1 Peter 4:8**

1. As you look at the relationships in your life right now, what is standing in the way of taking them deeper in commitment and openness? What relationships would you like to take deeper?
2. Human relationships are a reflection of God’s love and our relationship with our Father in Heaven. How can you take that relationship to a deeper and healthier place?

**Prayer (2 minutes)**

Loving Father, you created us to live together in relationships. May your Holy Spirit empower us to live in deep communion with you and may that open the door to have deep relationships with those around us. Heal the hurts. Redeem the shame. Give us hope. Show us the way to live in deep, healthy relationships that would point the world to you. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

See if anyone has lingering questions or insights to share from your time of study and prayer. Summarize the group discussion as a reminder of what you learned together.

**Scripture Challenge (4 minutes)**

This week try to memorizing 1 Peter 4:8. Use any of the following tools to help you: write it out, repeat it a few times as a group, set it to music, or draw an image that incorporates the words.