

000 Go Deeper Reflection Guide

GO DEEPER: REIMAGINING FAITH COMMUNITY

A Reflection Guide for "The Church Nobody Thinks Could Exist: Progressive Faith Meets Deep Tradition"

INTRODUCTION

In this thought-provoking episode of Making Sense of Faith, Adam Hamilton introduces us to three young pastors who are boldly reimagining what faith communities can look like in today's world. Their stories challenge us to consider how we might create or find spaces where ancient wisdom meets modern understanding, where questions are welcomed alongside answers, and where authentic community transcends traditional boundaries. Use this guide to explore your own vision for spiritual community and consider how these insights might transform your faith journey.

3 REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Take a moment to consider what resonated most deeply with you from these conversations:

1. Tyler described realizing "God made all of these things different on purpose so that they could work together... maybe God made me different on purpose as well." How might viewing your own differences—whether personality, background, or life experiences—as intentional gifts change how you see yourself and your place in community?
2. Julia dreams of creating "the kind of church that I've wanted to go to, that I've wanted my family members to go to, that I've wanted my friends to go to—and it doesn't exist yet." What would your ideal spiritual community look like? What elements would make you and your loved ones feel truly welcomed and engaged?
3. All three pastors heard their call to ministry at different life stages and through different circumstances. Whether or not you feel called to formal ministry, how might God be inviting you to serve others or make a positive impact in your community right now?

2 KEY INSIGHTS

1. Embracing Your Authentic Self in Faith

"God made all of these things different on purpose so that they could work together. And if all of these things are different on purpose then maybe God made me different on purpose as well."

Question: What aspects of yourself have you felt you needed to hide or change to fit into religious or spiritual spaces?

Reflection: Tyler's childhood realization in nature reveals a profound truth about diversity and purpose. Consider how your unique perspective, experiences, and even struggles might actually be gifts meant to contribute to community rather than obstacles to overcome. What would change if you fully believed that your differences are intentional and valuable?

2. Creating What Doesn't Exist Yet

"I'm dreaming of creating the kind of church that I've wanted to go to... and it doesn't exist yet. If it doesn't exist yet let's make it."

Question: Instead of waiting for the perfect community to find you, how might you help create the kind of spiritual environment you're seeking?

Reflection: Julia's vision challenges us to move from passive consumers to active creators of community. This doesn't necessarily mean starting a church—it could mean initiating deeper conversations with friends, starting a book club or small group, volunteering in new ways, or simply being the kind of person who makes others feel welcomed and valued. What small step could you take to help build the community you're longing for?

1 PRACTICE EXERCISE

The Community Visioning Exercise

Find a quiet space and take 10-15 minutes for this reflection:

1. **Close your eyes and imagine** walking into a gathering or community where you feel completely at home—spiritually, intellectually, and emotionally.
2. **Notice the details:** Who is there? What does the conversation sound like? How do people interact with each other? What values are evident in how people treat one another?
3. **Identify three specific elements** that make this space feel welcoming and authentic to you.
4. **Consider your current communities** (workplace, neighborhood, family, existing faith community, friend groups): Which of these three elements could you help foster in one of these existing relationships or groups?
5. **Choose one small action** you can take this week to begin creating more of what you envision—whether that's asking deeper questions in conversation, expressing vulnerability, showing curiosity about others' perspectives, or simply being more intentionally welcoming.
6. **Write down your commitment** and revisit it in a week to reflect on what you experienced.

Remember: You don't have to build an entire new community overnight. Sometimes the most transformative communities begin with one person deciding to show up more authentically and invite others to do the same.

QUOTES TO CONSIDER

"It's easier for God to redirect a moving object. So start walking in the direction that you feel called and wait to get redirected."

"We strive to be thought provoking. We know the dangers of certitude, and we do our best to remain humble."

"At our best we're Anglicans with our hearts on fire... we have the structure and the stability of 2,000 years of tradition... but then we're going to set that aflame with the fire of the Holy Spirit."

CLOSING REFLECTION

Building authentic spiritual community requires courage—the courage to be vulnerable about our questions, honest about our longings, and creative in our approaches to ancient faith. As you close this reflection time, consider that the community you're seeking might begin with the authenticity and welcome you're willing to offer others. Sometimes the most revolutionary act is simply refusing to choose between heart and head, between tradition and progress, and instead creating space for both to flourish together.

This reflection guide was created to accompany the Making Sense of Faith podcast episode "The Church Nobody Thinks Could Exist: Progressive Faith Meets Deep Tradition." For more resources like this, visit makingsenseoffaith.com.