



**theme:** Community – Acts 5 – Death and Life

**materials:** Bibles, pillow, pens and paper

The theme for this month's cell talks is community. We will be looking at the early Christian community in the book of Acts to shed light on what it means to be a Kingdom of God community now.

## welcome

Play a simple word association game. Someone stands in the middle of the circle, shouts out a random word, and then points to someone in the circle. That person has to then shout out a word that is associated with the first word. Then the person to their right has to shout out a word that is associated with the word the second person said, and so on around the circle as many times as you can go. (Example: "Duck!" "Water!" "Drink!" "Milk!" "Cow!" "Steak!" etc...) The game has to move fast. If someone takes too long to come up with a word, or repeats a word, or the association makes no sense, then the person standing in the middle hits them with a pillow. Then start again with a new word. Take turns being the person in the middle.

What is the most serious consequence you've ever had to face in your life for something you've done? How did you deal with it?

## interact

The name of Jesus is a powerful dangerous name.

Have everyone write down 10 things they associate with the name of Jesus. Share these things together, and use them as the basis for a prayer honouring his name.

## read

Read Acts 5 together.

What was Ananias and Sapphira's great sin?

Being killed by God is a pretty serious consequence. Why do you think they died?

Should we then expect that all liars and people holding back from their communities will or should be killed by God? Why or why not?

Why did the believers find it necessary to meet every day? Should you meet every day with your cell/church?

Do you think the persecutions by the authorities accomplished anything?

What continued to hold the early Christian community together in the face of all this persecution?

How should we respond to persecution as a community?

## think

Work out as a cell what things you can share more of (hold in common) that would enable you to become more interdependent. Could you put together a common book, DVD or CD library? Could you share meals more often? Could you share a vehicle? By living a simpler life of sharing, you present a witness to the world about community, love and trust that springs up from sharing the same Spirit of God.



## live & pray

What would happen if you intentionally wore the name “Jesus” on you somehow all week long? You could maybe write it on your hands, wear a shirt that bears the name, get it tattooed on your forehead, etc... Would you face any persecution as a result? Are you willing to find out?

## useful resources

Movie: *Romero* – The story of a Catholic peace activist who suffered great persecution.

Book: *The Irresistible Revolution*, by Shane Claiborne

## leader's guide

Ananias and Sapphira held back from the community and from God, and then lied about it. They killed trust, and killing trust would have killed community, and their ability to represent the name of Christ. It is a serious consequence to be sure, and not indicative of how all such sin will be punished here on earth (though all sin does lead to death). But it was an example of just how seriously God took His new Kingdom community, and how allowing such sin to exist would be so harmful and dangerous. The believers met every day because they were a part of one another's life, and because they needed each other in the face of persecution and hardship. They were also having to form what the new community of this new faith would look like, how it would grow and deepen and withstand challenges. There is no hard and fast rule about meeting everyday, though Church communities ought to be involved in each other's lives in significant ways.

The persecutions gave the early Christian community more opportunities to praise the Lord, and also cemented their commitment to each other and to Christ. At the same time, it was the rock solid belief in the truth of Christ that sustained the community in the face of such persecution. Christ was all that mattered to them, and they rejoiced to suffer for him.