



# Sunday School Is Going Back to Our New Testament Roots

This article is from Church Leaders by Ken Braddy

## Three Ways Sunday School is Going Back to Our New Testament Roots

It's hard to believe, but some Bible study groups haven't met since the beginning of the pandemic. Groups with older members may have chosen not to meet for safety reasons. Other groups haven't meet online through a tool like Zoom simply because they believed the technology was beyond them (those senior saints may not have had computers, smartphones, or tablets). But even during a pandemic, there are 3 ways Sunday School is going back to its New Testament roots. Groups are meeting again. Here's what's taking place.



**CHURCHLEADERS**

**1. Groups are meeting outside.** The photo to the right was taken yesterday morning at 8:30AM. My wife and I dropped in on one of our church's adult groups that is meeting in the backyard of a home that belongs to one of the group's members. "Sunday School under the trees" was a great experience! Not only were there 8 people present, two more joined via Zoom! In Acts 16 you'll find the story of Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She and others were outside at a river when they were found by Paul, who proceeded to interrupt their prayer meeting. The Bible records, "On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate by the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and spoke to the women gathered there. A God-fearing woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying" (Acts 16:15ff, CSB). Today groups are meeting in backyards, parks, driveways, beaches, and any other place they can practice physical distancing while still coming together for fellowship, prayer, and Bible study. This is just one way Sunday School is going back to its New Testament roots.





**2. Groups are meeting in homes.** Not only are groups meeting outside, some have regathered inside the home of a group member. These groups have continued to meet, just like the group I've mentioned above, but they've chosen to meet inside. I am reminded of the brief glance we have into the way first-century Christians met when we read their story in Acts 2:46. "Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house" (CSB). These early Christians did not have churches like you and I do today, so they met outside in the temple courts, heard God's Word preached, then moved to homes in smaller groups to have fellowship and to continue discussing the gospel message they'd heard. Today, we're getting back to these roots as Christians are gathering in homes for fellowship and study. When their churches reopen groups on campus, they may shift their location there. Or maybe not! There is something wonderful and intimate about meeting in a home, sharing food and fellowship, praying for one another, and discovering the truths found in God's Word. This is yet another way that groups are going back to their New Testament roots.



**3. Groups are meeting.** Like I said above, some groups have not met much, or at all, since the start of the pandemic. But things are changing now that we are six months into this global phenomenon. Groups are no longer willing not to meet, and they are finding ways to gather together safely. During times of persecution by the Romans or others, the church didn't stop meeting. She met. She met in homes, she met outside, but she met. We're seeing this again today! I like the way the King James Version presents Hebrews 10:25 – "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Groups are practicing this by finding ways to meet so they no longer forsake their gathering together. I am proud of the creativity and the tenacity I see in groups and group leaders who pivot and press on, finding a place and time to gather as groups.

Has your group found its New Testament roots? I hope you are meeting somewhere, somehow, and doing it safely and in accordance with your state's guidelines! If not, have a conversation with your group leader or your pastor about how your group could begin to come together once again.

