

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

“A powerful blueprint for unity.”

—Joshua DuBois, bestselling author of *The President's Devotional*

WHOLE:

A CALL TO UNITY IN OUR FRAGMENTED WORLD



SHARON WATKINS

Thank you for using the study guide to *Whole: A Call to Unity in Our Fragmented World* by Sharon Watkins. This guide was written to help readers dig deeper into the book, to enrich the reading experience, and to understand similarities in readers' views of faith, religion, and culture.

Table

1. What does “the table” symbolize for you?
2. What details did Watkins use to describe “the table” metaphor? As individual communion? As communion with God?
3. What are some words you would use to share with someone unfamiliar with the church what “the table” means to you?
4. Sharon asks us to remember tables that have been important in our lives. Why were they important? Was it the food, family activities, experiencing friendship, special celebrations, or other unusual events or activities?
5. Contemplate the different meanings of the communion table and communion service to long-time Christians. To new Christians? To non-Christians? To Christians who do not envision wholeness in the world? To you?

CHAPTER 2

Welcome

1. How do you personally relate to God? How would you express your process of individual communion with God?
2. How do you experience God in community? How does that perception affect how God's love is shared publicly?
3. On page 32, Watkins discusses two central elements of Christian community – the spirituality of God's love and the model of Jesus as love in action. How would you describe to someone how you make space for these elements of Christian community in your daily life?
4. What are some challenges you experience when reaching out to those different from you? What have you done or what can you do to overcome these barriers?
5. Tell a story of an instance when it was difficult to reach out to someone different from you. How did you overcome these differences?

Study guide for *Whole: A Call to Unity in Our Fragmented World* by Sharon Watkins.
(St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2014).

Wholeness

1. What are some of the fundamental differences between the definition of unity and definition of wholeness (shalom)?
2. How does understanding the above differences help individuals and/or churches bring about wholeness in our daily lives?
3. How does Watkins define justice? See pages 60-62. How do *you* define justice? What experiences shaped your view of justice?
4. What are some of the “human-made boundaries” that we take for granted? How do these boundaries prevent us from bringing about wholeness in others and/or in our communities?
5. The justice river story (p. 62) is a very telling one. How might you seek to locate causes, rather than effects of fragmentation?

CHAPTER 4

Movement

1. Based on what you have read up to this point, what are some of the connections between table and wholeness?
2. What connections do you see between wholeness and movement?
3. Knowing what we now know, at an individual/micro level, how can you actively participate in this movement for wholeness?
4. What has changed between your parents' world and the world you see today? How does this affect how we share God's love? How does this affect the way we view wholeness?
5. Given all the change in the world, what characteristics should the church take forward? What characteristics should the church abandon? What new characteristics do we need to develop to address the world's needs?

Study guide for *Whole: A Call to Unity in Our Fragmented World* by Sharon Watkins.
(St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2014).

Chapter 5—Disciples of Christ

Chapter 6—Christian Church (DOC)

1. What words would you use to describe God's reign in the world today? How would you describe this concept to someone with a rudimentary understanding of faith?
2. Express how you describe how you make room for Jesus Christ in your everyday life.
3. Sharon describes church as a place of "periodic reprovisioning for the next phase of life's journey." Does church feel like that to you? How does church recharge your batteries to continue the work of sharing God's love?
4. How do you make God's love real beyond the walls of your home? How does your congregation make God's love real beyond the walls of the church? What does this say about wholeness?

By Teresa Crist, David Torres, and Brad Lyons