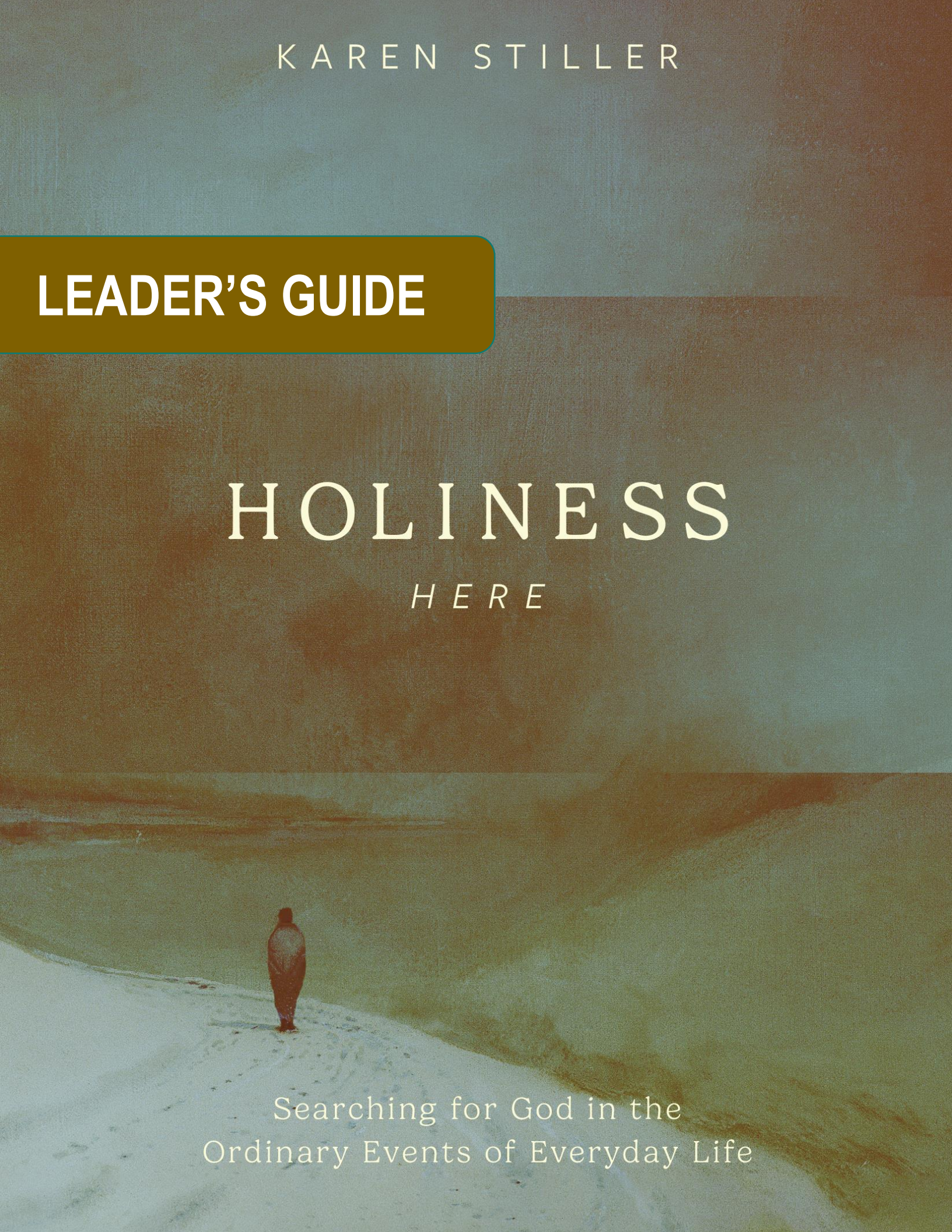


KAREN STILLER

LEADER'S GUIDE

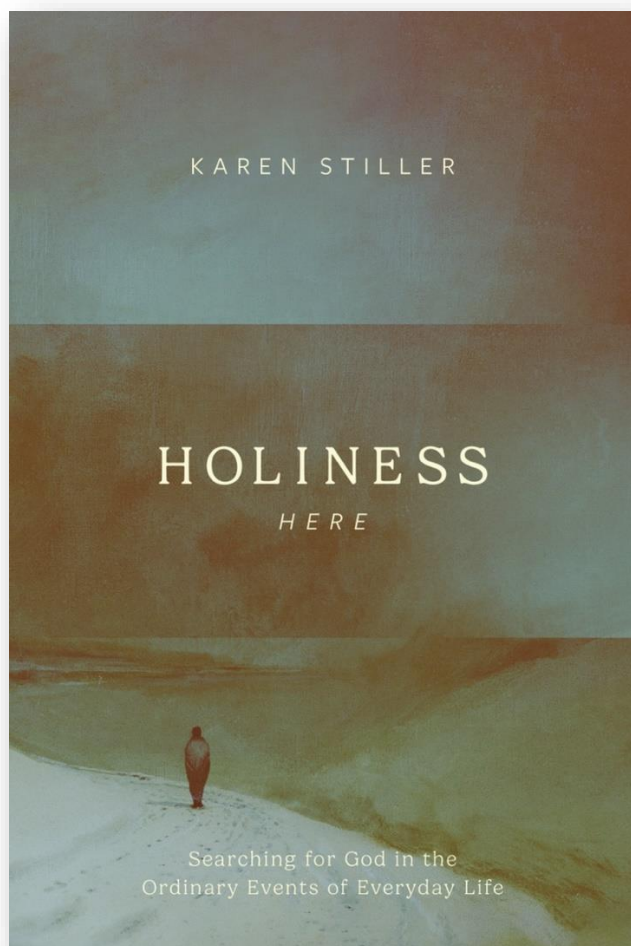
HOLINESS

HERE

A person is standing on a sandy beach, looking out at the ocean. The person is wearing a dark jacket and pants. The ocean is a deep blue-green color, and the sky is a lighter, hazy blue. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

Searching for God in the
Ordinary Events of Everyday Life

Holiness Here Leader's Guide



NavPress is the publishing ministry of The Navigators, an international Christian organization and leader in personal spiritual development. NavPress is committed to helping people grow spiritually and enjoy lives of meaning and hope through personal and group resources that are biblically rooted, culturally relevant, and highly practical.

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DEAR READER,

What does it mean to live a holy life here and now, for each one of us? I started wondering anew about holiness one Sunday in church when one of the pastors prayed, “Give us grace God, to lead a holy life.”

What does that really mean? I wondered. How is a holy life even possible, when we can make such big, messy mistakes and feel so far from God?

I’ve always struggled with the concept and call of holiness, maybe ironically, because my husband was a pastor. People routinely assumed we were holier than we were, and holier than they were! I knew the truth though, that we were just ordinary people stumbling along like everyone else. But also, like everyone else, we *were* growing over time, in community and with grace and forgiveness from God. And, yes, with a little bit of effort on our part.

Holy is. Holy does. We are already, and we are becoming. We rest in who God tells us we are – a holy people – and we also act that way in the world with love for each other and our neighbors. Holiness is an invitation into a deeper life and walk with God. It is an adventure.

I think we explore best about life and each other through honest storytelling and vulnerable sharing. That’s how *Holiness Here* is written. I hope that reading chapters together and using the discussion questions located at the back of the book, supplemented with this Leader’s Guide, can help you and your small group talk openly and honestly about holiness, its call, its promise, and its adventure. A holy life is not a boring life, it is a beautiful one.

One of my favorite parts of the writing life is hearing from people who might have read something, and it resonated (or very much did not resonate!) and they reach out to continue the conversation. I welcome you and your group to do just that. I’d love to hear from you. I’m also very happy to drop in via a video chat to explore questions together with your group during a session. Please feel free to reach out.

Like most writers, I set out to write a book not because I had the answers, but because I had the questions. *What does it mean to lead a holy life?* It is my prayer that *Holiness Here* can help just a little bit with finding some kind of answer together.

Warmly,

Karen Stiller

P.S. The discussion questions for each chapter appear at the end of the book. I hope they can help make your leading easier and foster open conversation within the group.

OVERVIEW

Do You Recognize Holiness in Your Own Life and in the Here and Now?

These days, brokenness feels more comfortable to discuss than holiness. It's easier to say that we are messy than holy, that healing is a long way off. To say that we are holy seems like one step away from holier than thou, and no one ever wants to be that.

Holiness Here offers practical and inspiring ways to transform your life by helping you see the holiness within your ordinary, everyday life. Holiness is:

- a warm invitation to a new and better way to live;
- a calling for our lives in Scripture;
- a search that marks the life of a Christian (even when we don't live fully into that reality); and
- a most basic urge—to live and love differently that we did before—because what we believe changes the way we act.


As a fellow pilgrim on the journey, Karen Stiller weaves together captivating stories, theological insights, and spiritual reflections to help you discover holiness in the mundane moments of your life.

With her engaging style and accessible voice, Karen invites you to embark on a journey of spiritual growth, discipleship, and wisdom. You will explore holiness from a fresh perspective, from the importance of community and the role of the church to ways to cultivate a deeper relationship with God and live out your faith. Karen also explores topics like the fruit of the Spirit, money and work, hospitality, and humility.

Read with a group, *Holiness Here* is a rich spiritual formation and discipleship resource that will inspire you to seek out the beauty and wonder of a holy life.

This leader's guide, a variety of graphics for promoting your group read, memes to share, and downloads are available at navpress.org/leader-graphics-hh.

Holiness Here is available at your favorite bookstore. Bulk discounts are available at navpress.com. Free shipping for orders over \$50. Based on \$16.99 retail price. Some Email csresponse@tyndale.com for ministry and retail discounts.

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Quantity	Discount	Price (per book)
10-49	(20%)	\$13.59
50-99	(25%)	\$12.74
100-499	(35%)	\$11.04
500+	(40%)	\$10.14
Discounts or prices subject to change		

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PLANNING

FORMAT

As you think about hosting/leading these discussions, here are a few tips to help you:

- **Start by praying about who to invite to your group.** This book is well suited to people comfortable with big questions and sharing openly and honestly together (that part will grow with time as the group meets). Stiller is a very transparent and honest writer, who is not afraid to reveal her weaknesses, which can create opportunity for vulnerability within the group. *Holiness Here* allows space for readers to come to their own conclusions and make their own connections. This book would be comfortable reading for young adults as well as more “seasoned” followers of Christ.
- **Decide on a regular place and time** for your gathering and how many chapters you will discuss in each meeting. There are 11 chapters, so your group could choose to do one a week over a few months, or they can be grouped together as in the sample plans shown below. You could also choose to do it “book-club style” and have everyone read the whole book before discussion. Decide what works best for you in your season of life and those who are joining you.
- **Consider that, if needed, the group could meet over Zoom** or another virtual platform.
- **Communicate the details** to your group. Include:
 - Dates and times (start and end)
 - Location (or link for virtual meeting)
 - A few details about the book. If people are expecting an academic approach to holiness, that is not how this book is written. The book is not the least bit intimidating. Set the casual, inquiring tone right from the beginning.
 - The facilitator(s)
- **It is helpful to have two facilitators**, whether you share duties or one person leads and the other serves as backup in case the lead facilitator cannot make it. Two facilitators also provide a sounding board for support and to troubleshoot issues that may arise.
- **Consider planning a fun gathering** so that people can get to know each other prior to your first session together. Holiness springing from joy, beauty and hospitality are themes of this book. You can set a warm and open tone right from the beginning.

TIMELINE

There are a variety of ways to structure your group experience. A book club could discuss the entire book in one night. The author has provided discussion questions at the end of the book for each chapter. Leaders can – and should as appropriate – guide the discussion in the right direction for your group. A warning that Chapter 10 “Sorrow” might be difficult reading for some participants. Here are two options for ways a leader might structure the group’s reading experience.

Eight-Week Format

DATE	PURPOSE	DETAILS
Eight Weeks Prior	Initial leaders’ meeting	Choose dates, time, location; create online registration
Four Weeks Prior	Announce group	Encourage sign-ups
Two Weeks Prior	Order books (on their own or in bulk. The best bulk discounts are at navpress.com).	
One Week Prior	Email group	Provide details of group
Launch Week One	Intro: Icebreakers and getting to know each other.	Hand out books (if buying in bulk) Discuss: “What is your ‘holiness hang up?’” “What do you think of when you think about holiness?”
Week Two	“Searching for Holiness,” “Fruit of the Spirit”	Discuss chapters 1–2
Week Three	“Body” “Money” “Hospitality”	Discuss chapters 3–5
Week Four	“Humility” “Beauty” “Church”	Discuss chapters 6–8
Week Five	“Remembering” and “Sorrow”	Discuss chapters 9– 10
Week Six	Final Night “Holiness Here and Now”	Discuss chapter 11 (final). What have you learned? How have you changed? What new practices might you adopt after reading <i>Holiness Here</i> ?

Four-Week Format

DATE	PURPOSE	DETAILS
Eight Weeks Prior	Initial leaders’ meeting	Choose dates, time, location; create online registration
Four Weeks Prior	Announce group	Encourage sign-ups
Two Weeks Prior	Order books	Arrange pickup spot or have participants buy on their own
One Week Prior	Email group	Provide details of group
Launch Week One	“Searching for Holiness” “Fruit of the Spirit”	Discuss chapters 1–2
Week Two	“Body” “Money” “Hospitality”	Discuss chapters 3–5
Week Three	“Humility” “Beauty” “Church”	Discuss chapters 6–8
Week Four	“Remembering” “Sorrow” “Holiness Here and Now”	Discuss chapters 9–11

PREPARATION

STRUCTURE YOUR TIME

There are so many ways you could structure your time together. Here are a few ideas:

- Welcome and fellowship. You might share a meal, a snack, or a drink.
- Allow an open-ended sharing time for people to discuss anything that stood out in that week's assigned reading.
- Plan what discussion questions from each chapter you will consider. Discussing multiple chapters in one night makes it unrealistic you will get through them all. Choose a few from each chapter that you think will benefit the group the most.
- Near the end of each session, make time and space for those who haven't shared yet to speak if they wish.
- If the group has decided they would like to pray together, share prayer requests, reminding people about confidentiality.
- You could end each gathering by asking participants to consider the "Holy is and Holy does" framework of the book. Ask them to think about and share *how they will be* and *what they will do* in the time before the next gathering, to live into and out of their holiness.
- Close in prayer.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Unlike other more straightforward theological textbooks or treatises, Stiller's book primarily uses storytelling to discuss and illustrate theological and spiritual insights, weaving personal anecdotes and vivid imagery together with Scriptural concepts. She often allows space for readers to come to their own conclusions and to make their own connections. She offers a nuanced, creative approach to discussing the topic of what it means to live a holy life, charting a middle path between the popular contemporary emphasis on being accepted "just as we are" and a perhaps more traditional, legalistic emphasis on righteous living (and the heavy shame associated with falling short of perfection).

You will want to create a safe space for those who come, and you'll also want to keep the conversation moving forward. Inviting people into this challenging conversation is vital for a healthy and redemptive community and oh—the hope that you can experience together!

Here are practices we recommend:

- **Make humility a non-negotiable and avoid judging others** (while missing the plank in our own eyes!). Remember that not everyone will be coming from the same background or share the same assumptions or starting place. Each of us needs to uncover our own blind spots and reconsider what following Jesus looks like in our real lives.
- **Make a group covenant.** It needs to be articulated clearly, but it doesn't need to be formal. Consider spending a few minutes at your first meeting discussing some guidelines for your time together, such as confidentiality in what is shared and being a safe space free of judgment.
- **Ask everyone to read the chapter(s) you will be discussing in advance.** When people come prepared, it is easier to stay on topic and make the most of your time together. (That said, sometimes life gets busy, and people will not have read in advance. Encourage them to still come!)
- **Make sure everyone knows to share the talking time** (no talking-dominators, please), and gently redirect someone who may be preventing others from participating in the conversation.
- **Keep the discussions on topic by moving through the questions.** Encourage those who may not have had a chance to talk by asking them what they think.

Stiller writes this in Chapter 8 (Church): "We are pilgrims together, with people whom we might never choose to share even a cup of coffee on a Monday morning let alone an intense life-long journey toward the One who beckons us forward. But there we are together, rushing in late and sometimes sneaking out early, moving deeper into holiness and eventually into heaven. We will spend eternity with people that we wouldn't choose to go bowling with."

We need each other. Groups like the one you are hosting can help us all in our walk of holiness. Thank you for doing this good work together!

KEY SCRIPTURES

These passages may be helpful to share with the group or to encourage them in follow-up emails or texts. The verses are mentioned or referenced in *Holiness Here* and help illustrate the biblical call to holiness, and God's love and patience with us as we live in and out of our beautiful identity and high calling.

John 20:18.

Matthew 5:13-16

1 Corinthians 13:12

Romans 12:10

1 Peter 2:9

Philippians 2:6-8

Zechariah 14:21

1 Peter 5:6

1 Peter 2:5

Matthew 6:26

Acts 17:28

Matthew 10:16

Romans 12:1-2

Jeremiah 18:6

Psalms 139:13

Psalms 146

Matthew 6:24

Luke 7:38

2 Corinthians 9:7

Matthew 22:37-40

Matthew 6:33-34

Hebrews 10:23-25

Matthew 6:19-21

Philippians 1:6

Hebrews 10:24

Psalms 103

Acts 20:35

Psalms 143:6

John 1:1

READER AND LEADER

We need each other to help us become holy.

Karen

#beholy