

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

Our 10th core value is **Ministry Training** and it says that we each member to discover and use their spiritual gifts free from the fear of failure. Instead of doing an in-depth study on spiritual gifts, Pastor Paul laid a foundation for the church by looking at three characteristics of the spiritual gifts God gives His church:

1. **Gifts have a PURPOSE:** God has given us ministry gifts specifically so that we can be prepared, built up, grounded and grown (Ephesians 4:11-16).
2. **Gifts have been PLANNED:** God is working in you, for you! He has planned the good works that you are destined to do for His kingdom (Ephesians 2:10) and is equipping you with the very gifts you need in order to accomplish those works! He hasn't simply "tossed out" gifts, but instead has intentionally arranged each of us for His glory (1 Corinthians 12:18). He is setting you up for a significant Kingdom destiny!
3. **Gifts need a PROCESS:** It's one thing to talk and dream of good works for God's Kingdom. It's another thing to begin doing those works, and that happens in a process of trial, error, and tons of grace! Ministry training happens within the body because the gifts are given for the good of the body (1 Corinthians 12:7). This also means that the body confirms the gifts that God has given each one of us and so when we try and fail, the mistakes aren't fatal and shouldn't keep us from trying again. We're just one step closer to discovering the gifts God has given to us and using them to serve His body and the world.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Read Ephesians 4:12-16 and review the 4 purposes of gifts: to prepare us, to build us up, to ground us, and to grow us. Which of these four so you feel you need the most in your life right now? Why?
- How do you typically deal with failure in yourself? In others?
- Read Ephesians 4:15 to find the key to how gifts are developed in the church.
- Take a few minutes and talk about “speaking the truth in love.” Can you share a time that you experienced that from someone else? A time when you spoke truth in love to someone else?
- Are you a planner or more spur of the moment? What are the pros and cons of each?
- When it comes to spiritual gifts in the body, God is a planner, intentionally arranging us (1 Cor. 12:18) in order to set us up for Kingdom works (Ephesians 2:10). Discuss why this truth can give us confidence in ministry training and gift development.
- When it comes to trying something new, all of us like a safety net. How can grace in the church body function as a safety net when we’re discovering and developing our spiritual gifts?
- What is the biggest obstacle for you personally that makes it hard for you to jump into a ministry team?
- What is the biggest payoff you might experience when you do jump into a ministry team?
- Describe the feel of The Gathering when literally hundreds of people are operating in their gifts each week in order to serve the members and the world?
- Which iOS Teams are you most interested in? Make a point to sign up before you go to bed tonight!

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.