

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

After 14 weeks of studying the 14 values that we hold dear at The Gathering, this week was a chance to catch our breath and ask the obvious question: now what? Since the likely next step for most of us will be to take ownership in the church as members, Pastor Paul taught very practically from 1 Corinthians 12 about what it means to be a part of what Paul calls "the body of Christ" in Colossians 1:24.

1. **There are many parts, but one body.** This is an easy concept to grab, because all of us look in the mirror everyday. We know that a hand doesn't look like a foot, or an ear like an elbow. Diversity is what makes the body a body. That's the point Paul was making when he wrote 1 Cor. 12:12-20.
2. **Every part plays a part.** This one is a truth we all know to be true but often live like it isn't. We naturally begin to feel like our part may be a bit more important, and so while we want the look of the body to have variety, we'd rather have the life of the body match the part we play. As a result, we value the members who value the same things we do, and see others as dispensable, even though 1 Cor. 12:22 says every part is indispensable.
3. **The body is to work together, not drift apart.** Eventually, every relationship – whether between two people or an entire church body – experiences drift because we all naturally focus on our area, our gifts, our passion, and this can cause "gaps" in the body. To combat this, we have to intentionally "fill the gaps in a way that wraps." As Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 13:7, we believe the best instead of assuming the worst about each other. This allows us to fill the gaps with grace.



Discuss

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

- Just for fun (really, no pressure!!), see how many core values your group can name (i.e., “Biblical truth”). Do you remember the “core four?”
- How does it feel knowing that you have a part to play in the body?
- Read through the list of “body parts” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28. Have you ever seen any of these at work in your own life? In someone else’s life?
- What observations can your group make about 1 Corinthians 12:21-24 that can help our church live out verse 25-26?
- Pastor Paul talked quite a bit about “gaps” that we all experience and how what we fill the gaps with is extremely important. What is your reaction to the statement that we all either believe the best or assume the worst about others?
- As a church and as individuals, how can we successfully “fill the gaps in a way that wraps?”
- Read Galatians 6:2. How are we able as a body to fulfill the law of Christ? How much more important does that truth make 1 Corinthians 12:26?
- Take some time to live out those 2 verse by praying for people in your group who are suffering and by rejoicing with people in your group who are experiencing “honor” (the favor and blessings of God) right now.

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.