

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN YOU COME TO GROUP HAVING PREPARED WITH THIS GUIDE!!

### Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

#### Message Summary

This week we wrapped up the first chapter of the letter to the Ephesians. We know from the extensive use of the phrases like "in Christ" and "with Christ" that everything we need comes from One, and this week we learned that God's plan for us in Christ is that we would live lives full of his life. In Ephesians 1:15-23, the apostle Paul showed us that we need 2 ingredients in order to live the full life instead of the half-full lives many fall prey to.

1. **We've got to be thankful:** This is kind of one of those things that we're pretty sure we're supposed to do, and so sometimes we're not as much thankful as we are trying not to feel guilty about not being thankful. But Paul wrote to the Ephesians that he was thankful for spiritual things, not just the physical things that we would say we're thankful for. Spiritual maturity allows us to be thankful for the saving power of God as well as the saved people of God. As the apostle Paul wrote, he NEVER STOPPED giving thanks for both of those. Have we?
2. **We've got to be prayerful:** It isn't enough to just be thankful, though. Many people are thankful for the stuff they have but are unaware of the One who gave it to them. And so Paul wrote that he was thankful as well as prayerful, and that he was praying for the believers in Ephesus to have their eyes opened so that they would see the hope of Christ, the riches of Christ and the power of Christ. In the message, Paul challenged our church with this thought: how would unity among believers change if we simply prayed that for our brothers and sisters in Christ?

#### Discuss

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

- During our break from Community Groups, we've celebrated Christmas and New Year's. Share some of the experiences you had during the holidays.
- Paul pointed out that in order to live the full life that Jesus talked about in John 10:10, we need to be both thankful and prayerful. Which of these is the most natural for you? Which is more difficult?
- Looking back over your notes from the past week, was there anything that confused you or really caught your attention?
- Read the following verses and discuss what we can learn about being thankful: 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Psalm 107:1; James 1:17; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Psalm 118:1; Psalm 100:4
- Read the following verses and discuss what we can learn about being prayerful: Philippians 4:6; Matthew 6L7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 11:9; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:8
- If comfortable, share the story of God's saving power in your life with the group.