

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 MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

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

Message Summary

One of the things that plagues our culture is loneliness, and so it should not surprise us that God has an answer for that. Loneliness happens when we stand alone, but in scripture after scripture, the Bible speaks about unity and reminds us that we should stand WITH one another against the enemy. Psalm 133 contains 3 powerful verses that reveal at least 5 important truths about unity.

1. **Unity is good:** The word that King David used to describe unity is "pleasant," and while we shouldn't assume that unity comes easily (because it doesn't), we should always remember that it is a good gift given to the church by a good Father. Things are better when there is unity.
2. **Unity is for the church:** It's good and pleasant when BROTHERS live in unity, and we must be careful to remember that unity in the church isn't like world peace. One of the reasons unity is such a powerful testimony about who Jesus is and why Jesus came is that long term Biblical unity is unachievable apart from Jesus. Unity in the church points the world to the cross where divisions were destroyed.
3. **Unity is more relational than informational:** Taking a course and learning to say the same things won't result in unity. Unity happens in relationships, or as King David wrote, when brothers LIVE TOGETHER. Biblical unity is about being one in heart more than one in mind. Unity isn't uniformity.
4. **Unity allows the Spirit to flow freely:** Nothing stops the flow of the Spirit more than disunity, and when the church is living as one, the Holy Spirit is free to flow – like oil down Aaron's beard. It's a strange picture, but it speaks to the flow of the Spirit, filling our gaps with grace and peace. Unity reduces friction.
5. **Unity positions us for God's blessings:** What happens in the church where there is unity? In the words of King David, God "commands" His blessing! The land at the bottom of Mount Hermon was the lushest land in Israel because of the dew and water that flowed down the mountain. As the **Big Idea** puts it, **blessing goes where unity flows.**

Discuss

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

- Read Ephesians 4:11-13. God gave different ministry gifts to the church to equip the church so that the church would be built up. According to verse 13, what is the mark of a church that is built? Do you think being mature helps us to live in unity? Share the reasoning behind your answer.
- John 17 is a powerful prayer of Jesus' in which He prayed for Himself, His disciples and all who would come to believe in Him. What can we learn about unity from the prayer that Jesus prayed for us in verses 20-23?
- In your experience, how does the enemy try to destroy unity in the church? What tactics do you think people closest to you need to be aware of and prepared for? How can you provide oil (a sign of peace and the Spirit) in those situations?
- In Ephesians 2:14, we read that Jesus destroyed the wall of hostility and brought Jews and Gentiles together at the cross (check out Galatians 3:28 to see more divisions that He got rid of!). The Greek word for "destroy" means to "obliterate, do away with, deprive of authority." If Jesus took away the power of division, who is responsible for any lack of unity among believers today?
- What takeaway, if any, did you have from the message this week?