



SMALL GROUP GUIDE: THE PRAYER

The Prayer of Jesus (John 17:8-18)

Small Group Guide: Unity in Christ

Key Takeaways:

1. Unity is something Jesus prayed for and something we must actively pursue.
2. Unity among believers proves to the world that we're followers of Christ and that He loves them.
3. Unity in the church enables believers to worship God in a way that's pleasing to Him.
4. We participate in Christ's prayer for unity by refusing to engage in worthless controversies.
5. Only Jesus can truly unify us, not our political beliefs, opinions, or preferences.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Jesus made unity such a priority in His prayer before going to the cross?
2. The pastor mentioned that "unity is not the absence of disagreement." How can we maintain unity even when we disagree with fellow believers?
3. Reflect on a time when you witnessed unity among believers despite differences. How did it impact you or others around you?
4. The sermon mentioned avoiding "foolish controversies." What are some examples of controversies in the church today that might fall into this category?

5. How can focusing on the cross help us maintain unity with other believers, even when we have differing opinions on other matters?
6. The pastor said, "Unity to Jesus with your brother and sister in Christ is even a prerequisite to our ability to worship." How does this challenge your approach to worship and relationships within the church?
7. In what ways might our unity (or lack thereof) as believers impact our witness to non-believers?

Practical Applications:

1. Identify one relationship in your life where there's tension or division. Commit to praying for that relationship daily this week and consider steps towards reconciliation.
2. Practice active listening this week, especially with those you might disagree with. Try to understand their perspective before responding.
3. Reflect on any "worthless controversies" you might be engaging in, whether online or in person. Make a conscious effort to disengage from these and refocus on Christ.
4. Choose one way to practically demonstrate unity within your church community this week (e.g., reaching out to someone you don't know well, serving in a ministry, supporting a church-wide initiative).
5. Spend time meditating on Ephesians 4:1-6 this week, asking God to show you how to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling" in regards to unity.
6. If there's someone in the church you've been avoiding due to a disagreement, take the initiative to have a respectful conversation with them, focusing on your shared faith in Christ.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, we thank You for the gift of unity through Christ. Help us to actively pursue and protect the unity of Your church. Give us the wisdom to discern between important matters of faith and worthless controversies. May our unity be a powerful witness to the world of Your love and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.