

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Fellowshipping, Reviewing & Praying*Fall Semester 2018***FELLOWSHIP WITH EACH OTHER**

This first week back, linger longer in fellowship. Let group members catch up with one another. Don't immediately sit down in a circle and make things formal. Even when you do sit down and "start" a bit more formally, as folks to share how their break has been, how they've been encouraged recently, etc. In other words, don't act like CG is nothing other than a formal Bible study – it's so much more!

This week, review the purpose of CG and spend time in prayer for CG. After you do that, you will not have time to discuss Psalm 51 and Romans 12. Pick one and let that serve as the abbreviated discussion portion for your group.

REVIEW PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY GROUP

Don't feel the need to spend too much time here, but at least highlight and briefly review the purpose of Community Groups (Maturity, Mutual Care, and Mission). More information can be found in the CG Leader Handbook pages 17-19.

1. Remind the group of the three main purposes of CG then briefly discuss. As you discuss the below questions, try to bring in each element of CG (i.e. discussion, prayer, fellowship, accountability).
2. What does it mean to be a MATURE or maturing Christian? How does CG foster maturity?
3. How Does Community Group foster MUTUAL CARE?
4. How Does Community Group foster MISSION?

PRAY FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

This first week back, take time to pray for your CG and all other CGs. Below are some suggested ways to pray. Perhaps you could print them out and have various people pray accordingly. That's only a suggestion so feel free to pray as you see fit.

- **Unity in the Gospel:** That every CG member would put gospel unity above personal preference.
- **Maturity in Christ:** That we would help each other grow in Christ-likeness.
- **Mutual Care:** That we would care for each other both physically and spiritually.
- **Mission:** That CGs would be a place where non-Christians hear the gospel and a place where we encourage each other to advance the gospel.
- **Community/Family:** That there would be a deepening sense of family among all the members of our CG.

- **Vulnerability:** That our CG would be a place where sins are confessed and the gospel is humbly and appropriately shared with each other.
- **Conversions:** That the Lord would use CGs (and all of Restoration’s ministries, both corporate and personal) to bring people to faith in Jesus.
- **Multiplication:** That the Lord would bring so many people to our CG that we would have to start another CG by the end of the year.
- **Delight:** That the Spirit would cause every person in our CG to find great delight in loving and pursuing Jesus.

Faithful in Christ Jesus

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS

OVERVIEW

Everything—literally everything—in heaven and on earth is being united in Christ (1:10). Only when we understand who Christ is can we begin to understand who we are. We often read Paul’s letters thinking about all Scripture calls us to do. But before Ephesians calls us to do anything, it reminds us what God has done in Christ.

Our identity is not based on what we do, but who we are. Our identity is not earned and achieved but declared and received. Our identity, as Christians, is found “in Christ.” We are united to Christ—and that changes everything about us! Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus explains what we were (apart from Christ), who we are (in Christ), and then how we should live as followers of Christ, all for the glory of Christ.

STUDY // EPHESIANS 1:1-2

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God’s word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

1. Read Ephesians 1:1-2.
 - a. What can we learn about this book from these introductory remarks?
 - i. *Author:* Who is writing? How does the author view himself? Discuss the following:
 1. Paul
 2. Apostle of Christ Jesus
 3. By the will of God
 - ii. *Audience:* Who is the recipient? How are they described? Discuss the following:
 1. Saints
 2. Faithful
 3. In Christ Jesus
 4. At Ephesus

- iii. *Greeting*: What are the first words? Discuss the following:
 1. Grace to you
 2. Peace from God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ
 - a. These set a gospel tone right from the beginning!
 - b. Why is it important to stop and consider these things and not just rush past them?
2. Read Ephesians (the whole book).
 - a. What sticks out or captures your attention?
 - b. Identify major themes
 - c. Review the structure (one way to summarize is below).
 - i. Chapters 1-3 – The Position of a Christian
 1. The new life we have in Christ (1:3-2:10)
 2. The new society (the church) created by Christ (2:11-3:21)
 - ii. Chapters 4-6 – The Practice of a Christian
 1. The new standards for Christ (4:1-5:21)
 2. The new relationships in Christ (5:22-6:24)
 - iii. The main idea is that Paul first describes our position in Christ before commanding our practice.
 1. Why is this order important to realize?
 2. What’s the danger in separating position and practice (i.e. you can have the position without the practice)?
 3. What’s the danger in reversing the order (i.e. thinking our practice gives us our position)?
3. Spend time praying for our study through Ephesians.
 - a. Remind the group to come on Sunday’s prepared to hear God’s word
 - i. The schedule is on the Ephesians sermon card.
 - ii. The schedule can also be found on the app (click the Ephesians button).
 - iii. And the text/songs are in the weekly email.
- General Bible study questions:
 - **God**: What does this passage teach me about the character of God?
 - **Humanity**: What does this passage teach me about myself and my need for God?
 - **Christ**: How does this passage teach me that God has met my needs in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
 - **Response**: How should I respond with my affections and my actions?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

REVIEW: Take some time to review the purpose of accountability. Below is a summary. You can also use the full “Accountability” article included in this email.

- Accountability relationships provide regular encouragement and, when necessary, admonition to spur each other on toward love and good deeds.
- The idea is to build relationships with other brothers/sisters who are active in your life, care for you enough to challenge you when you fall into sin, support you in times of

discouragement, and encourage you to grow in grace and wisdom.

- The primary focus should aim at the heart not just circumstances or behavior.

QUESTION: How has your summer been? Where have you seen God's grace in your life? Are there areas where you have struggled?