

40 DAYS OF COMMUNITY LIFE GROUP OUTLINE OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES TO COMMUNITY SESSION 6

MEMORY VERSE:

“Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” I Cor. 13:7 NIV

Introduction: One of the crucial parts of learning anything, including love is learning to pass the _____ that come. To have real community we must go from loving the ideal of community, to making love real in the hard situations of community.

“Community is the place where the person you least want to live with always lives.” Henri Nouwen

- A. To grow in community, we have to understand that God calls us to community not just to fulfill us but to _____ us and make us more like Christ.
- B. This includes learning something very countercultural. It means learning how to let differences deepen our relationships instead of dividing our relationships.

Steps to growing and maintaining unity in a divided world:

- I. Sharing God’s _____ and beliefs about unity and community.
Philippians 2:1-9 NIV, “Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every...”

- A. Loving and walking in unity fills God with joy and it is the way we fulfill His highest _____.
 - 1. By humbling ourselves to walk in unity we rise to walk in victory.
 - 2. Without unity, we _____ have God’s blessing, anointing, and power.
“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”
 - B. This means being reconciled is more important to us than _____. It means we become determined to deepen our relationships through difference instead of dividing our relationships because of difference.
- II. Living in unity means we embrace the cost Jesus paid to have unity for us. We let God take from our hearts what divides us and put in our hearts what _____.**

- A. We decide to lay aside the right to _____ people for what they're not and choose instead to accept them for what they are. To accept people doesn't mean you condone or agree with them.
- *"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:17 NIV)*
 - *"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order bring praise to God." (Rom. 15:7 NIV)*
- "It is possible to be 100% for people you are only 20% in agreement with."
- B. We decide to lay aside our pride to find unity through _____.
- *"Where there is strife there is pride." (Prov. 13:10 NIV)*
 - *"Pride leads to arguments." (Prov. 13:10 LB)*
 - *"Love does not cherish an inflated opinion of its own importance." (1 Cor. 13:4 PHP's)*
1. **Symptoms of pride:** can't admit wrong, pickiness, stubborn, critical, comparison, has to be right, have the last word, pouty
 2. **Humility:** quick to admit wrong, truly longs to see from another person's perspective.
- C. We decide to lay aside _____ for selflessness/servanthood.
- *"...not looking out for your own interests but each of you for the interests of others." (Phil. 2:4 NIV)*
 - *"The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others-and ignoring God-harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him harvests a crop of real life, and eternal life." (Gal. 6:8 MSG)*
 - *"What causes fights and quarrels? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it." (James 4:1-2 NIV)*
- D. We set aside _____ for the security that comes from God's love.
1. Insecurity is what makes us withdraw, be oversensitive, put up walls, and take things so personally because of fear of rejection or wounds of the past. It makes us try and control people and fear people controlling us.
 2. Security comes from realizing how much God loves us, letting him heal rejection and finding our _____.
- *"Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid...this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love." (1 Jn. 4:18)*
 - *"All who proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them... We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in Him. God is love... And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid... (1 John 4:15-17)*
- E. We set aside the right to be resentful for the choice of _____.
1. Resentment will _____ relationships.

- “Look after each other... Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you, for as it springs up it causes deep trouble, hurting many in their spiritual lives.” (Heb. 12:15 LB)
- “Catch all the foxes, those little foxes, before they ruin the vineyard of love...” (SOS 2:15 NLT)
- “The Lord says, “Forget what happened before and do not think about the past. I am going to do something new... I will make rivers on dry land.” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

2. We forgive by releasing our past and giving up _____ to be resentful.

III. Unity means be willing to learn the _____ of true community.

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” (Eph. 4:15 NIV)

A. God doesn’t just want us to seek reconciliation in our heart but in our communication because this causes _____.

B. Speaking the truth in love means

1. Privately 2. Kindly 3. Humbly 4. Honestly 5. Purposefully 6. With help if necessary

(Answers: tests, change I. Values, purposes, cannot, being right II. unites us, judge, humility, selfishness, insecurity, identity in Him, forgiveness, destroy, right III. communication, growth

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. ICE BREAKER

Was there a fairy tale, a movie, or TV show, when growing up became the picture in your mind of what the ideal relationship or family should look like to you?

2. Do you have an example of how God helped you work through a difference in a relationship that helped that relationship go deeper? Do you have an example of God bringing you into a relationship with people, who you naturally might not relate to but through Jesus you grew in love with?

3. Which of the barriers mentioned do you feel God might be especially speaking to you about to deal with:

a. Accepting people who you might naturally tend to judge.

b. Facing an issue with pride in relationships. How might God be telling you to bring more humility to a relationship?

- Admit your struggle
- Ask forgiveness
- Be less stubborn
- Quit comparing myself
- Not being so picky or critical

c. A relationship in which I have been selfish in

- Exploring ways to complete more than compete
 - Being a better listener
 - Showing up
 - Expressing thanks and appreciation more
 - Offering to serve and not give into laziness
- d. Overcoming insecurity
- Letting walls down
 - Not letting hurts from the past be an excuse for making relationships in the present
 - Taking the risk of exposure
 - Facing where I tend to take things too personally
 - Justifying aloofness
- e. Overcoming resentments and being willing to forgive
- Facing up to the fact that there is a person or hurt in my past I've still let imprison me
 - Ignoring little foxes (irritations) building up in a relationship that create distant
 - Noticing a hardening in my heart and attitude that is causing distance with a person or God
4. What would be something you might ask for prayer for to be able to overcome an obstacle you need to overcome in community?
- Courage to have a kind and honest conversation
 - healing, confidence, grace...