



## The Blessing of Christian Community

### Community Group Study Guide: Ephesians 2:11-22 – Week of August 27, 2023

#### Why is Christian Community a Blessing?

##### 1. Jesus lived among His enemies

One reason that we are tempted to stray away from Christian community is because that community often presents challenges. It presents circumstances in which we struggle to continue to love one another. Here is a chance to look to our Savior, and reconsider our perspective. Christ lived among a community, in which ultimately, He was hated and rejected. Disowned by His people, forsaken by His disciples, denied by His closest friends. Jesus lived among His enemies, and yet He persist in community with them. We likewise should remember Christ, and face the challenges within the community we are called to love.

##### 2. Many Christians don't experience Christian community

This is another area in which we as Christians must recalibrate our hearts. Often, we take for granted the great and dear blessing of having a community. For many Christians, they have had their community stripped away. Too often we become comfortable, and even calloused, toward the wonderful grace of Christian community... a grace that many desire and do not have. This should change our perspective.

##### 3. The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength

We see in 2 Timothy 1:4 that Paul has a significant desire to see Timothy in the flesh. As Christians, we should desire to be with the people of God physically. We even see the significance of this type of fellowship in Christ. The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. Likewise, we should desire to have these relationships, as they are a source of joy and strength. An incredible blessing and resource given by God.

##### 4. A Christian has alien righteousness... and we need to be reminded of it constantly

Perhaps the greatest blessing of being in Christian

#### DISCUSSION GOALS

##### Head

God has created us to be in community with other believers. We are made in His image, and have been designed to experience healthy and ongoing relationship. However, because of sin, our designed relationships are in need of redemption and sanctification. We must strive toward our intended community, even though it presents challenges.

##### Heart

Because of the effects of sin on our community in Christ, we still face hurt and hardship. We must look to Christ, who forgave and reconciled us to himself... and likewise treat our brothers and sisters. We must continually strive for fellowship with one another, despite the challenges.

##### Hands

Continually strive for fellowship with Christian community. Pursue forgiveness and unity whenever possible, knowing that our righteousness is alien.

community is the ongoing reminder that our righteousness is alien. We see in the broken vessels surround us that God uses flawed instruments to declare His truth. It is a constant reminder of our needed humility. We should remember that we are a broken vessel, who finds their righteousness and worth in the fact that Christ is in us. Community helps remind us of our proper identity. We are infinity valuable, because Christ has loved us and called us to be His own. In our salvation, there is a confession that we are sinful, and unable to save ourselves. It is Christ who provides our righteousness. Furthermore, we can be called out of our failure and sin, because we are no longer slaves to sin but have been reborn into a newness of life. Christian community plays a tremendous role in reminding us of who we are in Christ.

#### **5. We are going to spend eternity together, forever**

As Christians, we must keep an eternal perspective when considering our day to day lives. Our relationship with community around us is part of that forever view. This means that in the moment, we have the opportunity to be building up the Holy Temple of God within the body. Right now, we have a foretaste of the joys that are going to come in eternity. Every day we have a chance to enrich and encourage the community that we will spend eternity with.

## Read Ephesians 2:11-22

1. Many times in his letters, the apostle Paul encourages and instructs the Church to pursue peace and unity (Col 3:13-14, Rom 14:18-19, Phil 2:2). What areas, aspects, or actions of community challenge that peace and unity? What specific ones to face within our body?
2. How does our identity in Christ help heal division in the Church? How is the Gospel essential to unity?
3. How does/how should the knowledge that Christ lived among His enemies change our perspective on the challenges we face?
4. How have you experience joy and strength from physically being with other believers? How should we respond if we find ourselves not experience this blessing?
5. How are we blessed by being reminded of our “alien righteousness?” What effects does such recognition have on our hearts?
6. Why is an eternal perspective so important to our day to day lives? How does this perspective change the way we view one another today?
7. Do you find Christian community a blessing? Why or why not? What actions or choices have impacted your experience?