Small Group Guide “We Belong Together”

Ephesians 2:11-22

Before You Begin

This session deals with grief, loss, and the comfort found in Christian community. Be sensitive to where group members are emotionally. Create space for honest conversation and resist the urge to rush through difficult moments. Remind the group that there are no wrong feelings and no pressure to have all the answers.

Key Takeaways

1. Christ has brought us near to God. Those who were once separated from God have been brought into His presence through the blood of Jesus. Our access to the Father does not depend on our emotional strength or our ability to find the right words. It rests entirely on what Christ has done.

2. Christ has made us one. The cross did not only reconcile us to God. It reconciled us to one another. The church is not a collection of individuals who happen to share the same beliefs. It is a household, a family formed by grace and held together in Christ.

3. Christ builds us together. Jesus is the cornerstone. Every member of the household takes their place in Him. That includes those who are strong and those who are weak, those who give care and those who need it. Neither group is less a part of the family.

4. Our hope rests in the risen Jesus. Grief is real and sorrow is not a sign of failed faith. But believers grieve with hope. That hope is not wishful thinking. It is anchored in the death and resurrection of Jesus and in His promise to raise His people.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. When you think about the phrase "we belong together," what comes to mind? How does that phrase feel different in a season of grief compared to a season of celebration?
2. Pastor Randy was honest about his own grief and uncertainty. How does it affect you when a leader admits they do not have all the answers?

Going Deeper into the Text

3. Verses 11-12 call us to remember who we were before Christ. Why does remembering our former separation matter? Does it change our relation to God and each other?
4. Verse 13 describes believers as having been "brought near by the blood of Christ." How does grounding our access to God in what Christ has done rather than in what we do change the way we approach Him in seasons of pain or doubt?
5. In verses 19-22, Paul describes the church using the image of a building with Christ as the cornerstone. What does it mean practically for a church family to align itself with the cornerstone? Where do you see that happening well, and where is it a challenge?
6. Pastor Randy referenced Romans 8:26, which describes the Spirit interceding for believers through wordless groans when they do not know how to pray. Have you ever been in a season where you had no words? What did you learn about prayer or God?

Connecting to Life

7. Romans 12:15 calls believers to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn. The pastor noted that sometimes we struggle more with someone else's joy than with their sorrow. Do you agree? Why might that be?
8. "Our presence matters a lot more than having the perfect words." Think of a time when someone's presence meant more than any words spoken. Why was it meaningful?
9. Galatians 6:2 instructs believers to carry one another's burdens. Pastor Randy mentioned that some people are good at giving care but struggle to receive it. Which side of that tends to be harder for you, and why?
10. The pastor described how comfort received equips us to comfort others, drawing from 2 Corinthians 1. Can you think of a difficulty you have walked through that has given you a greater capacity to come alongside someone else in a similar situation?

Sitting with Hope

11. In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul tells grieving believers not to grieve as those who have no hope, not to stop grieving. What is the difference between grieving without hope and grieving with hope? What does that look like in real life?
12. "The depth of our sorrow doesn't diminish the strength of His victory. And the strength of His victory doesn't require us to minimize our sorrow." How does that statement sit with you? Is it easy or difficult to hold both of those things at the same time?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

- **Pray honestly.** Set aside time this week to bring God exactly what you are carrying, without dressing it up. If words are hard to find, simply tell Him that and ask for His help.
- **Move toward someone who is hurting.** Identify one person in your life who is carrying grief or difficulty. Reach out with a simple, low-pressure message. You do not need to have the right words. Showing up matters.
- **Do one practical thing.** Think of a specific, tangible need you could meet for someone in your church family or community this week. A meal, a phone call, a yard that needs mowing. Follow through.
- **Read together.** As a group or on your own, read Psalm 62, Romans 8:18-27, and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 this week. Let these passages be a reminder of what is true when grief makes it hard to hold onto truth.
- **Keep showing up.** The pastor reminded us that the need for love continues long after the urgent messages slow down. Make a commitment to check on someone not just this week, but in the weeks ahead when others may have moved on.

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by inviting group members to share one word or phrase that describes what they are carrying right now. Then pray together, bringing those words before God honestly and without pressure to resolve them. If it feels right, remind the group of Romans 8:26 before you pray, that even when words fail, the Spirit intercedes on our behalf.

This guide is based on a sermon preached from Ephesians 2:11-22 as part of the "We Believe" series at Southside Baptist Church.