



COMMUNITY Groups

July 16th, 2017: ORANGE SUNDAY

OPENING

- What was something that stuck out to you from Eric's sermon?
- Describe a partnership in your life that worked out great. Have you ever experienced a partnership flop?

DISCUSS & APPLY

Read Philemon 1-7

- What are the six descriptions Paul gives to his fellow Christians in verses 1-2? How do each of these uniquely help us understand what the partnership among Christians should be like?
- How would you describe Paul's perspective of Philemon? Can you think of anyone for whom you are thankful, not because of how they love you, but because of how they love others?
- According to verse 5, Philemon's faith and love are public knowledge. When people talk about you when you're not around, do you think they talk about your faith in Jesus and your love for people? What can you do at work or school to make people notice your faith and love? At social gatherings, what would be an appropriate means of expressing your faith and love?
- Eric talked about loving others on social media. What are the main ways you use social media? How do you think you could use it to better love others, especially fellow Christians?
- Reread verse 6. What are the good things we share? Why do you think Paul says that we share these things *for the sake of Christ*?
- According to verse 6, why is it important that Christians partner together in their faith? How can we help each other better understand the good things we share through our faith?
- Like many other people at that time, Philemon owned servants, and one of them (Onesimus) had run away. After he had fled, Onesimus met Paul and became a Christian. The problem was that running away was a capital offense for a servant. So Paul is writing this letter asking Philemon to receive Onesimus back not only as a servant, but as a brother in Christ. If you were Paul, would you send Onesimus back to Philemon? If you were Onesimus, would you go back?
- Read Philemon 12-17. Why did Paul send Onesimus back? How is this act of partnership an opportunity to help everyone "deepen their understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ"?
- Describe a time when you played the role of a reconciler, approaching someone on behalf of another person. What were your hopes? What were your fears? How did you decide what approach to take?



FINAL APPLICATION

Community Groups exist in order to create the kind of partnership among Christians where we can grow in our faith and truly love one another. What can you do as a Community Group to go deeper together in your faith and love?