

# Life Changing Community Group Discussion Questions

week of 9/6/26

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today as brothers and sisters in Christ, grateful for Your grace and the community You have placed us in. As we open Your Word together, we ask that You would quiet our hearts and minds. Help us to set aside our own assumptions and defenses, and give us ears to truly hear what Your Spirit wants to speak to each of us today. May this time together be marked by honesty, humility, and love. We trust You to lead this conversation, and we surrender our own agendas to Your purposes. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

## Ice Breaker

Think of a time when someone unexpectedly showed up for you during a difficult moment. What did that mean to you?

## Summary

In this sermon drawn from Matthew 18:15-20, Pastor Joel challenged the congregation to reconsider the ancient question: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' He argued that Jesus intentionally directed this teaching to believers, using the word 'adelphos' (brother or sister) to make clear that this was a family matter within the church. Pastor Joel distinguished between minor offenses that require patience and forgiveness and genuine sin that causes real harm and requires loving confrontation. He emphasized that the goal of confronting a straying sibling is not punishment or winning an argument, but rescue. Just as the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine to find the one lost sheep, we are called to go after those who are wandering, motivated by love and the desire to bring them home.

## Key Verses

- Matthew 18:15-20 New International Version (NIV)
- Matthew 18:12-14 New International Version (NIV)
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 New International Version (NIV)
- Deuteronomy 19:15 New International Version (NIV)
- 1 John 1:9 New International Version (NIV)

## Questions

1. The sermon pointed out that Jesus used the word 'adelphos,' meaning brother or sister, to make clear this teaching is directed at believers within the church family. How does thinking of your church community as family change the way you approach conflict with other members?
2. The parable of the lost sheep is placed immediately before Jesus' teaching on confronting a sinning brother or sister. What does that connection tell us about the motivation behind going to someone who has caused harm?
3. Pastor Joel described sin not simply as 'missing the mark' but as recklessly causing real harm to another person. How does that fuller understanding of sin shape the way you think about your responsibility to others in the church?

4. Pastor Joel asked whether we can tell the difference between a sin that needs to be confronted and an offense that simply needs to be forgiven and forgotten. How do you personally try to make that distinction in your own relationships?
5. Pastor Joel described bringing witnesses not as 'dogpiling on the sinner' but as offering assurance of love and seriousness. How does that reframe the way you think about accountability within a community of faith?
6. The sermon connected Matthew 18 to the communion table, saying it is not possible to sit at the table when we are at odds with one another. What does it look like practically to pursue reconciliation before participating in communion together?
7. Pastor Joel closed by suggesting the Holy Spirit might be calling us to respond, which might include: to confess and repent, to go lovingly to a wandering sibling, or ask God for more patience with a minor offense. Have you sensed the Spirit speaking on you, and what is one step you could take this week?

## **Life Application**

This week, prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind one relationship where you may have been avoiding a necessary conversation or holding onto an unresolved offense. Ask God to help you discern whether this situation calls for loving confrontation, patient forgiveness, or personal repentance. If the Spirit leads you toward a conversation, take a practical first step by reaching out to that person privately, whether by text, phone call, or a planned meeting. Go not to win an argument, but to win your brother or sister back. Trust that Christ goes with you into that conversation.

## **Key Takeaways**

- Jesus directed His teaching in Matthew 18 specifically to believers, making clear that we have a real responsibility to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are, in fact, our sibling's keeper.
- There is an important difference between minor offenses that require patience and forgiveness and genuine sin that causes real harm and must be lovingly confronted. Wisdom and the Holy Spirit help us discern which response is needed.
- The purpose of confronting a sinning brother or sister is not punishment or self-justification, but rescue. Like the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to find the one, we go after the wandering person because God does not want anyone to be lost.
- Bringing witnesses into a difficult situation is an act of love and assurance, not an attack. It communicates seriousness and care, giving the straying person every opportunity to hear the truth and come home.
- God has entrusted the church with the ministry of reconciliation. The communion table is a powerful reminder that we are called to be a reconciled and reconciling community, and that Christ Himself is present with us in every effort to make things right.

## Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the Good Shepherd who never stops searching for the lost. Thank You for coming after us when we were wandering, and for calling us into a family where we belong to one another. As we leave this time together, give us the courage to go to those who are straying, the humility to receive correction when we are the ones who have wandered, and the patience to forgive the offenses that do not need to become conflicts. Remind us that You go with us into every hard conversation, and that Your mission is always to restore and to reconcile. May we be faithful ambassadors of Your love this week. In Your name we pray, Amen.

---

*A Note About These Questions: These small group questions are developed from each week's sermon with the assistance of Sermonshots, which incorporates AI technology. The resulting questions and content are reviewed and edited by the pastor before being shared with the congregation.*