

Leader's Guide

Strengthening the Family

Being One

Pastor Ron Russell

July 12, 2026

This week's goal is not simply to discuss the importance of unity. It's to help each person ask, "What role am I playing in building the kind of Christ-centered community Jesus prayed for?" As your group talks together, look for practical ways to love more intentionally, extend grace more freely, support one another more faithfully, and invite others into the life of Christ's family.

1. Jesus prayed that His followers would "be one" (John 17:20-23).

What do you think biblical unity looks like in a church where people have different personalities, opinions, and backgrounds? How does **Ephesians 4:1-6** shape your understanding of biblical unity?

Teaching Point:

Unity doesn't require uniformity. Jesus never prayed that His followers would all think alike, but that they would be united in their love for Him, their commitment to His truth, and their mission to make Him known.

Follow Up Prompts

- Have you ever experienced a church that demonstrated healthy unity? What made it different?
- What attitudes or behaviors tend to threaten unity within a church?
- How can humility help preserve unity?
- In what ways can diversity actually strengthen the body of Christ?
- Which part of Ephesians 4:1-6 stands out to you the most? Why?

2. Ron shared that love should always be greater than our disagreements.

Think about a relationship where disagreement, hurt, or frustration has created distance. What would it look like to pursue unity without compromising truth? Is there a step God may be asking you to take this week toward forgiveness, reconciliation, or understanding?

Teaching Point:

Conflict is inevitable, but division isn't. Christ calls us to pursue truth with grace, forgive as we've been forgiven, and choose love even when relationships become difficult.

Follow Up Prompts

- Why is it often easier to avoid conflict than to work through it?

- What's the difference between keeping the peace and making peace?
- Have you ever experienced reconciliation that brought unexpected healing?
- How has Christ's forgiveness toward you shaped the way you forgive others?

Additional Scripture: Romans 12:16-18; Colossians 3:12-15

3. Jesus said that the world's belief in Him is connected to the unity of His followers (John 17:23).

How does the way Christians treat one another either strengthen or weaken our witness to those who don't yet know Christ? Where have you seen genuine Christian community make an impact on someone's faith?

Teaching Point:

People often encounter Jesus through His people before they encounter Him through a sermon. Our relationships either reinforce or undermine the message we proclaim.

Follow Up Prompts

- Have you ever been drawn toward or pushed away from faith because of how Christians treated one another?
- What do you think people outside the church notice most about Christians?
- What practical acts of love or service communicate the gospel without words?
- In what ways does our church already model this well?
- How can our church become a better picture of Christ's love?

Additional Scripture: John 13:34-35

4. Ron challenged us to intentionally invite others into the fellowship of God's family and to courageously share our faith.

Who is one person or family God has placed in your life who may need an invitation, either to church, to a conversation about faith, or simply into a Christ-centered friendship? What practical step could you take this week to move toward them?

Teaching Point:

Sharing the gospel usually begins long before someone hears a presentation of the gospel. It starts with genuine relationships, intentional invitations, hospitality, prayer, and everyday faithfulness.

Follow Up Prompts

- What keeps most Christians from inviting someone to church or talking about their faith?
- Which feels more natural to you: inviting someone to church or sharing your personal testimony? Why?
- How can we pray specifically for the people God has placed on our hearts?
- What is one simple, low-pressure invitation you could extend this week?

Additional Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20