



“The United Way”

— Go Deep— Small Group Plan

Dear Small Group,

*All the believers were one in heart and mind.
Acts 4:32*

*Live in harmony with one another.
Romans 12:16*

*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace
and to mutual edification.
Romans 14:19*

*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement
give you a spirit of unity among yourselves
as you follow Christ Jesus.
Romans 15:5*

*I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
that all of you agree with one another
so that there may be no divisions among you
and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.
1 Corinthians 1:10*

*Live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic,
love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.
1 Peter 3:8*

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- Who strikes you as the most mature person:
 - the one who listens or the one who interrupts?
 - the one who tolerates a different opinion or the one who rejects it?
 - the one who looks for common ground or the one who looks for differences?
 - the one who asks questions or the one who makes statements?
 - the one willing to reconsider or the one with their mind made up?
 - the one who acts alone or the one who works with others?
- Explain your answer.

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

Ephesians 4:1-13

¹ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.” ⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

CALLING

Ephesians 4:1

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then,
I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

- What does it mean to be a willing “prisoner for the Lord?”
- What life did God call you to leave?
- What life does God call you to live?

CHARACTER

Ephesians 4:2

*Be completely humble and gentle;
be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

- Humility, gentleness, patience – define each.
- How does each cultivate unity among followers of Jesus?

COMMITMENT

Ephesians 4:3

*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit
through the bond of peace.*

- Sometimes a principle can be made clearer by stating its opposite. Consider these opposite statements of Paul’s unity principle:
- “Don’t make much of an effort to promote unity.”

- *“Make every effort to find and highlight differences.”*
- *“Make every effort to place your view above others.”*

- What’s wrong with these statements? How do they hurt unity?

CONVICTION **Ephesians 4:4-7**

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

- Do you think there is any significance in the fact that Paul lists seven items as the ground for unity?
- How do these seven items bring unity?
- How do these foundational, core principles differ from the smaller items that divide people?

CHRIST **Ephesians 4:11-13**

¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

- How can a godly understanding and exercise of our differences (v. 11) contribute to unity (v. 13)?
- On the other hand, how can a misunderstanding of our differences bring discord and division?
- Jesus had complete understanding, perfect knowledge and the best plan. On the other hand, the Twelve were unaware, misinformed, stubborn and selfish (like us).
- So - Why didn’t Jesus instantly replace their thoughts and plans with his?
 - Why did Jesus put his mission into their flawed hands?
 - Why did Jesus tolerate them at all?
- *“Until we all reach ...”* (v. 13) sounds like a process. How do we live together as God’s process continually unfolds in our hearts?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- What is easiest for you – to give your viewpoint or to ask for others? Explain why?

- How would you explain God's amazing patience with His divided family?
- What can we do to promote unity in our own congregation and in the larger community of followers of Jesus?
- Close by asking God to help us to become more aware of how important unity is to Him.