



“The Body” Ephesians 4 Small Group Plan

Think through these four *false* views of church:

- ? **THE CHURCH IS A GAS STATION** — a place to fill up my spiritual tank when I’m running low.
- ? **THE CHURCH IS A MOVIE THEATER** — a place where I leave my problems at the door, relax in a comfortable environment, and be entertained.
- ? **THE CHURCH IS A DRUG STORE** — a place I can fill a prescription to deal with the pain in my life.
- ? **THE CHURCH IS A RETAILER** — a place that offers the best products and services for me and my family, in a clean and safe environment.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- What is wrong with these views?
- How would you describe what has often been called a “consumer church”?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— UNITY —

Ephesians 4:1-6

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.

- First, identify the **seven graces** or attitudes in verses 2-3.
- Give a brief definition of each.
- Of the seven, is there one that is central to all the others? How?
- Which attitude do you think is most urgent for churches today? Explain.

- Which attitude is most difficult for you to accept or live by? Explain.
- Give a brief definition of each of the **seven essentials** listed in verses 4-6.
- What is the significance of Paul giving a highly detailed list of unity essentials to a church needing unity?
- What happens to our unity when we pick and choose our own doctrines and attitudes?
- If Paul lists seven essentials, what are the problems with one of us adding an eighth or ninth item? Explain.

— UNIQUENESS —

Ephesians 4:7-16

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. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

- After focusing on our unity Paul turns to our uniqueness. What is the difference between the two?
- What is the purpose of spiritual gifts (vs. 11-12)?
- How and why have spiritual gifts been abused?
- What is mark of a mature church (vs. 13, 15)? Explain.
- How would you explain the balance of “truth” and “love” (v. 15)?
- How does the “whole body” depend upon “each part” (v. 16)?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- How have you observed someone “speak the truth in love” (v. 15)?
- What is needed for “each part” to do “its work” (v. 16)?
- What will help us to “*keep the unity of Spirit through the bond of peace*” (v. 3)?
- What would help you to “grow up into Him (Jesus)” (v. 15)?
- Close with prayer for the unity of our church?