

The Gathering Growth Guide

ONE // Week 7 // One prayer for one body

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Ephesians 3:14-21

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN YOU COME TO GROUP HAVING PREPARED WITH THIS GUIDE!!

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

Typically when the apostle Paul wrote a letter, he would spend the first parts explaining doctrinal truth and then the last parts explaining practical ways to live it out, and Ephesians is no exception. Here, at the end of chapter 3, Paul prays something very specific for the believers in Ephesus that he knew they would need in order to begin living out the truth he'd been writing about. This morning, we examined the content of that prayer and the context of that.

1. **The content:** The apostle Paul is a bit like an onion. Not because he smells bad, but because even the simplest things seem to have never-ending layers, and so getting to the heart of the matter often requires peeling back those layers. It's a lot like peeling an onion! While we know right away in verse 14 that Paul's praying, we have to dig down a bit to get to the actual request that he's making. He prayed for strength (v. 16), for the presence of Jesus (v. 17), and for power (v. 18). While that seems like 3 prayer requests, they were all part of the ONE things Paul prayed for: that the church in Ephesus would know – in their head and experience – God's love.
2. **The context:** First, Paul is praying this in the context of the seemingly impossible. Basically he's told a group of people who had hated each other for centuries that they are now part of the same family. He's told them that even though they have lived in isolation from each other, now God is uniting them as ONE body for ONE purpose: to be an example to the rest of the culture of his power to transform each of us into his masterpiece of grace. That's a bit overwhelming. And second, he prayed this in the context of relationships. Paul explains **that to know God's love, we have to be in love** with others. It's impossible to grasp if we're not "together with all the saints."

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- As you've thought back through this week's message, what one thing – if any – inspired you or maybe even confused you?
- Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was that they would "grasp" the greatness of God's love. The word for grasp means "to make one's own." Talk through the difference between head knowledge and experiential knowledge. What are the pros and cons of each? Who in the Bible had the most head knowledge? (Pharisees)
- Take some time to read the following passages: Jeremiah 17:7-8; Colossians 2:6-7; Psalm 1:3; Matthew 13:3-6. What can we learn about the importance of roots in our lives? How does this make being "rooted together" a more powerful metaphor for the church?
- The most obvious takeaway from this passage is that God's love is something that we fully understand IN COMMUNITY with each other. Our Big Idea says it like this: to really know the Father's love, get to know the Father's family. How does praying for each other help with this?
- Close the night praying for each other's needs.