

# The Gathering Growth Guide

## We are Family // Part 1 // Family means we're accepted

Paul Jenkins

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Luke 15

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 with a break from Community Groups during the. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family as you prepare to attend your Community Group.

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

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## Consider...

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

### Message Summary

Sometimes we get so busy **doing** Christian things that we forget that we **are** Christians and are a part of a **family** of Christians. When we remember that the church isn't a machine made up of parts as much as a family made up of people, it changes the way we see each other and the way we see the church. In Part 1 of "We are Family," Paul began laying the foundation of why family is so important, and what being in a family means for each of us.

1. **The biggest lie in Castaway.** Remember that great movie? Tom Hanks played a FedEx employee stranded on a deserted island for 4 years all alone. But the biggest lie of the movie is that he was alone. He wasn't! He had a companion named Wilson (even if it was a volleyball). We were made for relationships. In fact, Genesis 2:18 says we shouldn't be alone, and that was well before the sinful fall of man in Genesis 3. Needing others is the design of God, not the curse of sin.
2. **God made family easy, our sin makes family hard.** Without trying to be funny, it's important to notice that before sin entered the world, the relationship between Adam and Eve was so easy and natural that they didn't even have to figure out what to wear! (It's true – right there in Genesis 2:25) But sin wrecked all that, and relationships weren't immune to that. Genesis 3:16 describes the resulting conflict and tension between Adam and Eve.
3. **God sent His son far in order to bring more sons near.** God wasn't content to leave us out of the family, and so He sent Jesus to pay for the damages that our sin had caused. Acknowledging our sin and brokenness and trusting what Jesus did allows each of us to call God our Father, and puts each of us in a family with others who have done the same.
4. **Family means we're accepted.** When we join the family of God, we're accepted by a forgiving Father and by a forgiven family, and with the open arms of the cross and the extended arms of the church. We can't say "no" to anybody when the cross says "yes" to everybody (Romans 10:13).

### 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?
- Take some time as a group and share some of your best family memories. Take note of how the mood of the group changes as people share. Is it lighter? Heavier? Why does family affect us so deeply?
- How hard (or easy) is it for you to accept everyone no matter what they've done or where they've been? How does that change when the person is a family member?
- Read Luke 7:36-47 and then Matthew 18:23-33. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two passages. What can we learn about forgiveness and unforgiveness, acceptance and unacceptance?
- In the passage from Luke, we see that being forgiven affects our attitude toward Jesus. Read 1 John 1:9 and Hebrews 8:12. What does a forgiving Father do with our sin and how should this affect our worship?
- The passage from Matthew shows us that our forgiveness from God should impact our forgiveness of men, because **forgiven people forgive people**. Who do you need to forgive the same way God forgave you?