

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 WILL BEGIN AGAIN THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 15TH

### Consider...

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

#### Message Summary

This week we studied the last part of Acts 20 and saw that the apostle Paul called together the elders of the church in Ephesus in what will be the first of a number of farewell addresses that Paul will give over the next few chapters. As we saw, when we know that we're talking with people we love for the last time, we don't mess around with a lot of fluff. Instead, we take the time to tell them the things that we know, and that makes the good-bye a little easier to handle. As our Big Idea states, **it's easier to go when you know**. Here are 4 things that the apostle Paul knew:

1. **He knew how to live:** When you read verses 18 and 19, you see that Paul lived with integrity and humility in spite of pain and persecution. When we do that, it's a whole lot easier to say good-bye to the people we care about.
2. **He knew how to preach:** Verses 20-21 show us that Paul preached about Jesus boldly. He never hesitated to point people to Jesus, and he did it in a way that was practical. He taught people what would be helpful to them. He also preached publicly, privately and consistently. We'll find standing before God will be a lot less stressful if we'll do the same!
3. **He knew how to follow:** Great leaders are first great followers, and the apostle Paul was no exception. Verses 22-24 tell us that he was led by the Spirit into danger for a purpose. The purpose was to point people to Jesus, and as much as we wish it wasn't true, we're all a whole lot better at pointing people to Jesus when there's danger. We'll never leave well if we're only willing to follow Jesus in the good times.
4. **He knew how to leave:** Reading verses 25-32, we find that Paul left with a clear conscience (he had done his best to preach the whole Gospel to everyone), with a clear warning (guard yourselves and the flock) and with a clear blessing (he committed them to the grace of God). When it's time for us to leave, it's important that we can leave the same way Paul did.

#### Discuss

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

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- How do you handle good-byes? What thoughts and emotions tend to flood you during the good-bye? What about in the days after the good-bye?
- Read 2 Peter 1:12-15. What can we learn from how Peter handled the good-byes that he knew would inevitably come?
- Many of us think we have integrity and humility, but until we're tested like Paul was, we don't really know if we do or not. How do you think you would have handled the events described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:23-29?
- When – if ever – have you felt led (Paul uses the word "compelled" in Acts 20:22) by God into a dangerous situation? How did God use you in that situation to point people to him?
- Read 2 Timothy 4:7. These are some of the last words Paul wrote. What do you need to do right now so you can leave with words like these?