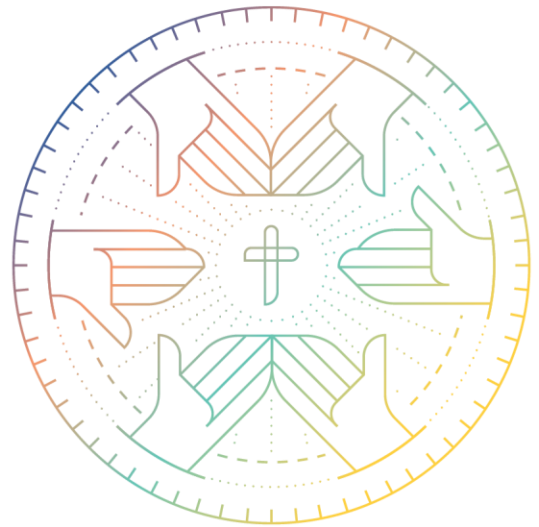


# Group Life.

WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER



## ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

What is your favorite thing about your best friend?

OR

Are you someone who enjoys having many friends or a few close friends?

## INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

In the message, Levi said, “Deep relationships help us experience God.” Have you seen this to be true in your life? How so?

**Read Ephesians 4:1-7.** Describe the qualities that believers are to possess to “live worthy of the calling you have received”. In what ways do these qualities help us foster deep relationships?

*Host Guidance:*

- *Gentleness is displayed through genuine concern for people’s needs.*
- *Patience produces a loving tolerance of people’s weaknesses (including one’s own) without encouraging such shortcomings.*
- *Humility seeks to bring glory and honor to God not oneself.*

*Paul states the qualities we need to honor God and foster deep relationships are humility, gentleness, and patience. We develop these traits by spending time in the Word, therefore, deepening our relationship with God. By having a strong relationship with Him, we can then be more grounded to encourage and equip our friendships with Godly wisdom and endurance.*

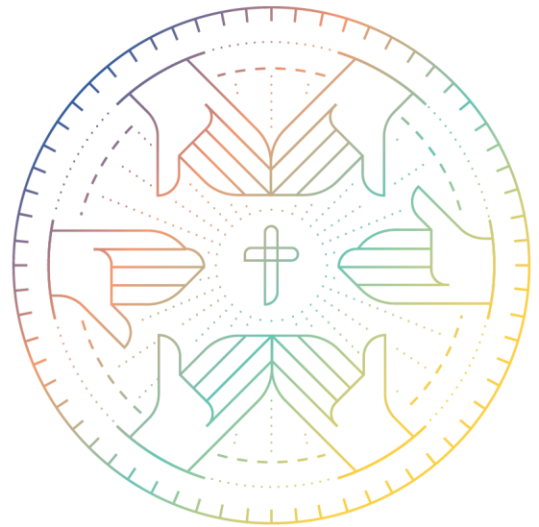
## INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

**Read Ephesians 4:11-16 and Ephesians 2:8-9.** What does a mature believer look like?

*Host Guidance: A mature believer is knowledgeable of the Scripture and Jesus (v. 13) and strives daily to further his or her faith and trust in God. They store the Word in their hearts as mentioned in Psalm 119:11 and try to emulate Jesus in their actions (v. 15).*

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**Look up definitions of “unity”.** Using these definitions and Ephesians 4:15-16, what should a church body that exemplifies unity look like?

*Host Guidance: Matthew 12:50 states, “for whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” The church body is to offer love and support to each other as one family, lifting each other up when struggles occur. We are to further the Kingdom by utilizing our talents and gifts and to act as one in harmony. We are not to create unity, but to keep the unity God bestows upon us as a new creation who has died to sin. Fostering true unity requires gentleness and patience and humility.*

*Unity definitions:*

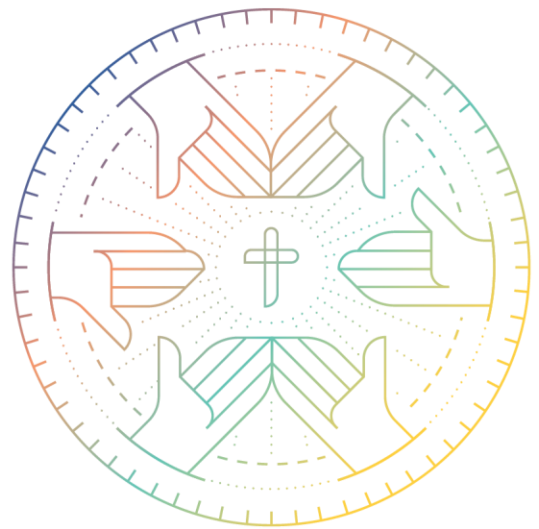
- 1. The quality or state of not being multiple: Oneness*
- 2. A condition of harmony: Accord*
- 3. The quality or state of being made one: Unification*
- 4. A totality of related parts*

**Read Romans 5:3-5.** Every relationship has its challenges or rough patches. How does this verse encourage us to persist in building deep relationships with others? How does it allow us to trust God in those situations?

*Host Guidance: Relationships are hard and conflicts eventually arise due to our sinful nature. But, by knowing that God has freely given us mercy and grace, it allows us to have softened hearts and offer it to others. Colossians 3:13 states, “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Not everything can be solved instantly, but we have a glorious God who is in control of all and can change hearts in hard situations. We should hold onto John 13:35 which states, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

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## APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

Ephesians 4:2-3 states that the qualities of Godly friends are humility, gentleness, and patience. Think of one relationship in your life right now. In what ways can you nurture and apply these actions in a practical way this week?

Our relationship with Jesus allows us to freely give grace, patience, and peace. Sometimes, we can settle into a routine and simply check off reading our Bible or singing a worship song. What does it look like for you to cultivate a deep relationship with Him this week?

What is one step you can take toward deeper relationships within your small group?

*Host Guidance:*

*Some suggestions could include:*

- 1. Serve together*
- 2. Plan a gathering outside of group time*
- 3. Take time in your group to share prayer requests and partner with 1-2 people to lift those requests up*

Imagine yourself next year. What qualities would you want to be known for? What steps can you take to grow in humility, gentleness, and/or patience?

## PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

*Dear Lord, thank you for setting the example for relationships and guiding us in our own. You are a good Father who wants us to cultivate deep relationships that glorify you. Please help us to have loving action towards each other and to lift up the body of Christ. In your precious name we pray, Amen.*