

Community Group Questions Guide

Ice Breaker (10min):

Help people to loosen up and share. Take one more week to go around and have people share their name, and what their plans are for the weekend.

Opening Prayer (5min):

- **Introduce time of prayer-** After the group welcomes one another, open in prayer. Let your group know what to expect during prayer time, something like: As we start our group time I will open with a word of prayer, there will be a minute or so of silent reflection and then I will read the scripture from Sunday and then close in prayer and we will enter into our discussion time.
 - **Open with a brief word of prayer-** God we thank you for this time together, we open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us, allow us to hear your voice and experience your spirit at work. Come Holy Spirit.
 - **Sit before the Lord in silent prayerful reflection for 1-2 minutes**
 - **Read the scripture listed below aloud for the group to reflect on.**
 - **Close in a word of prayer:** God thank you for your word, come holy spirit and allow us to understand what it means for our lives, lead us in our time of discussion together. In Christ's name, amen.

Main Scriptures from Sunday:

Romans 11:1-24 NIV

11 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. **2** God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: **3** "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"^[a]? **4** And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal."^[b] **5** So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. **6** And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace. **7** What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened, **8** as it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that could not see and ears that could not hear, to this very day."^[c] **9** And David says: "May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. **10** May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever." **11** Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation

Community Group Questions Guide

has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. **12** But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring! **13** I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry **14** in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. **15** For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? **16** If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches. **17** If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, **18** do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. **19** You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” **20** Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. **21** For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

Ephesians 4:1-12 NIV

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. **2** Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. **3** Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. **4** For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. **5** There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all. **7** However, he has given each one of us a special gift[a] through the generosity of Christ. **8** That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.”[b] **9** Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world.[c] **10** And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. **11** Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. **12** Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. **13** This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

Read this message overview to the group: (5min)

Hopefully you had a chance to hear the message from Sunday. In Sunday’s message Pastor Josh Bueno talked about the apostle Paul’s ancient letter to Roman Christians that reveals God as a merciful, ever present God, who’s faithfulness isn’t swayed by our

Community Group Questions Guide

imperfections. God ultimately revealed his compassion for a disobedient mankind by giving us his only son Jesus, who gave his life as a ransom for our sin. Jesus not only gave his life to fulfill the hope of God for reconciliation with all mankind, but Jesus also gave a vision of his desire to see all mankind reconciled one to another, in unity.

Paul's desire to see the Jewish and Gentile Christians united as believers was deeply influenced by the vision and sacrifice of Christ. The good news of reconciliation through Christ, and the vision of Jesus to see mankind united with one another, should lead us to live more into the way of unity, which is the way of Jesus.

In Sunday's message Pastor Josh shared three ways we can live more into the vision of unity that the apostle Paul, and Jesus himself desired for all believers. These three ways are based on Romans 11:

1. The way of persistent faith, as opposed to an apathetic, indifferent way of living. Romans 11:1-12, Ephesians 4:1-13
2. The way of deep humility, as opposed to an arrogant way of living. Romans 11:13-24, Deuteronomy 7:6-9
3. The way of awe filled worship, as opposed to the way of unconscious religious practices.. Romans 11:25,30-36, Romans 8:28

Work though these discussion questions together (30min):

- Is there one of these three points that stuck out to you the most? If so, share which one.

Read aloud for the group:

To summarize Romans 11—Paul writes to the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome about: 1. God's persistent faithfulness to Israel despite Israel's disobedience and indifference toward God. 2. God's humble evoking faithfulness to the world that grafted Gentiles into the family of God. 3. God's unfathomably rich wisdom and knowledge that works all things out for the good of those who love him.

Paul's ultimate desire for the Roman Christians was that they would accept one another just as Christ accepted them. Paul desired to see the Jewish and Gentile Christians embrace one another in Christ, so that in one voice and one mind, they would glorify God.

Community Group Questions Guide

In Romans chapter 11 Paul is rallying the Roman Christians together around the faithfulness of God. The roots of spiritual apathy and indifference are nurtured by our inability to recognize the faithfulness, mercy and love of God for us.

- Are you currently, or have you at times in the past been apathetic and or indifferent to the daily faithfulness of God?
- Knowing how much God daily desires to share his faithfulness with you, In what ways could you be more persistent and present in your faith?
- One of the ways God demonstrates his faithfulness to us is by gifting us, so that we might be a part of the work in building one another up in unity. Can you recognize the gifts God has given you? How might you be able to use your gifts to spur one another on in unity and persistence in faith?
- Humility is an important characteristic in a believer of Jesus because it embodies the character of Christ. Paul saw the arrogance of the Romans Christians as an oxymoron. Why do you believe arrogance has no place in the Christian life? How does arrogance cause division?
- Pastor Josh mentioned on Sunday that; “The hill from which we look down on others, is the place from which we’re arrogant.” Can you identify the high hill places of arrogance in your own life?
- Paul closes chapter 11 of Romans by awakening the unconscious ignorance of the Jews and Gentiles to the fact that; through his love, God is at work faithfully in all of their lives. How might us being more conscious to God at work in the lives of all believers unite us?

Group Prayer (10min):

- Share personal prayer requests and spend some time praying for one another as a group. Ask someone to write down prayer requests and send them out to the group to pray for one another during the week. The hope is to get your group comfortable with sharing personal prayer needs and praying for one another regularly.