

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

Firstly, you will notice that at the start of each lesson there are three important bits of information. These will be the basic tools you need to lead the study.

All Scripture will appear in this BLUE colour. All Scripture references are taken from the NIV version of the Bible unless otherwise stated.

All discussion questions are in this GREEN colour. These discussion questions are meant to help open up times of sharing in your group.

Occasionally you will see text in RED. Red text are some ideas and thoughts that you may want to use for your group.

The bulk of the text will be in BLACK. This is the script and information for your lesson. However, please do not stick to the script word for word. The information is there just to serve as a guideline. Please feel free to lead or facilitate the discussion in the way which GOD is leading you.

Community Group Study

Blueprint - Colossians 3:15-17

Pastor Jim McInnes

15 April 2018

It's been a tough week for our community. The church has had to deal with some very sad news. It is in moments like this that we need to live out the type of community that we have been talking about over the last few weeks; a community that loves and walks alongside each other, especially during the toughest of times.

As the group leader, it is not your responsibility to take on everybody's heaviness, but rather, help your group

members look towards Jesus if they are in a time of mourning. He is the one who will ultimately bring the healing that people are in need of.

Remember that community groups should be a safe place for people to come and share their struggles. If you are struggling or need support in any way, please know that you can reach out to me (Ellison) at any time. There are many different ways that we can help you and your group members. I pray that you will reach out for help in your times of need.

Finally, if you or any of your group members are struggling, especially with mental and emotional health issues, you are not alone. There is always help and support in this area for those who need it. There is no shame in coming forward and bringing these issues out into the light. Again, do not hesitate to reach out if you need support in this area.

I am honoured to be a part of our community! I pray that God will ever bind us closer together in His love.

Opening Discussion Questions:

Pastor Jim's message this week was entitled "Members of One Body." If you want a fun (and challenging) activity to start your session, try this quiz on the human body. Go to this link <https://www.britannica.com/quiz/the-human-body>. Unless you have a doctor in your group, this might be more difficult than you think!

- Why do you think the Bible uses the human body as an illustration for the 'Body of Christ'?
- What makes a church community different from other communities?

A few weeks ago, Pastor Andrew pointed out just how diverse The Vine is as a community. The diversity we see at The Vine may be very different from what we see anywhere else.

- In what ways have you been able to notice the diverse nature of The Vine?
- How does diversity make you feel?

In Pastor Jim's message this week, he reminded us that despite the fact that we are all made up of all kinds of different backgrounds, ethnicities, income levels, professions, etc. We have been placed together through the saving grace of

Jesus Christ, because of this, what bonds us together is far greater than the things that separate us.

- Why do you think that being united together through Christ is more significant than being united through anything else?

One of the reasons this is significant is because if God has placed you in His body, it means that you are an **important part** of His body.

Read Colossians 3:12-14

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

There are a few **key** phrases in these verses we will look at to help us

understand what it means to be **one body** in Christ.

God's chosen people

- Why did you choose to attend The Vine?
- Why did you choose to attend this Community Group?

People choose churches and community groups based on many different things. When I was a teenager, I chose to go to youth group because a girl I liked at the time also went to youth group! *Can anyone else relate to this?*

Perhaps you chose The Vine because you liked the music? Maybe you chose your Community Group because the time and location is convenient.

But have you ever thought of your place at The Vine and at your Community Group as a 'calling'? You are where you are because God has placed you there. This also means that there is a reason why God has placed you there.

- What do you think your purpose at The Vine is?
- Why do you think your purpose in your Community Group is?

There may be people in your group who are feeling quite insignificant at the moment; they may not feel as though they have much purpose. This is a good time to let them voice that frustration. At the same time, you can encourage them by reaffirming their significance.

This might also be a good time to evaluate how you are leading your Community Group. Are there any areas of responsibility in your group you could delegate to someone else? Remember, one of your primary responsibilities as a group leader is to empower those in your group. If you need some help in doing this, please let me know!

God doesn't do anything by mistake! If God has placed you within a community, He has a purpose for you there!

Clothe yourselves...

Even if there isn't a specific **task** that you have within the community right now, there is still something you can do to contribute towards it.

Paul asks us here to **clothe ourselves** with the following virtues:

Compassion

Kindness

Humility

Gentleness

Patience

- How do you decide what to wear each day?
- Tell us about your favourite piece of clothing.

Clothing ourselves with the attributes mentioned above is something that we can all do. Paul uses the word '*clothe*' because he knows that these attributes are all intentional choices that we have to make. Just like we have to choose to put on certain clothes in the morning, we need to choose to live by these attributes.

- What do you think our communities would look like if everyone chose to ‘put on’ these attributes every day?
- What would be the opposite of these attributes? What would our communities look like if we lived by these opposites?

Forgive one another...

If we all lived by these virtues, hopefully there would be very little need to forgive each other. However, we are all still imperfect humans who struggle with sin. There will be times when we get things

wrong. There will be times when we fail to treat each other as God has called us. This is why Paul reminds us to forgive each other.

- Why is forgiveness so important to our community?
- In what ways do you struggle with forgiveness?
- Is there anyone who God is calling you to forgive?

This might be a challenging part of the session. There might even be people within your community group who are struggling to forgive each other. If so, you may need to take some time to help

people come to a place of forgiveness. Pastor Jim also shared in his sermon that before preaching this message, he had to deal with a friend who he had struggled to forgive. What about you? If you feel God working in you regarding forgiveness, do not ignore it. Bring it to the light and allow God to help you deal with it.

We forgive because we have received God's forgiveness. God offers us His forgiveness because of one simple yet **powerful** reason. Love.

Love

The reason why we live by these virtues and forgive each other when we fall short is because of love. Paul says that love is what binds it all together. If we tried to live virtuously and forgivingly without loving each other it would all be meaningless.

- How would you define love?
- What is the greatest example of love that you have seen?

There are many different standards we can go by when we try to define what love is. The love that is mentioned here

is **Christ's love**. We know what this love is because we have this love inside of us. Look back to verse 12. It tells us that we are *dearly loved*. It is only because Christ loved us first that we know how to love other people.

- Tell us about how you have experienced God's love.

A Call to Persevere

I hope you are getting a picture to how beautiful this type of community could look like. This is probably the type of

community that we would all like to live in.

However, a community like this will take time and perseverance to build. Pastor Jim challenged us to continue to press into community even when it gets difficult. He said:

“My generation, and you, younger millennials have been sold a lie by our contemporary culture that it’s only worth participating and belonging to any kind of community so long as you’re enjoying yourself and are having your needs met. If it feels good, do it; if it doesn’t, walk away.”

Let's not give up on each other when times get tough, but instead, let's choose to walk closely with each other, especially when times get tough. We will not always get along, but we can always choose to love and forgive.

- What are your opinions on Pastor Jim's statement?
- Why do you think people of the 'younger' generation are so quick to give up on things?

Jesus modelled the type of community He wanted us to build with the way He led His disciples. They didn't always get

along and agree with each other, but yet, because of their devotion to following Jesus, they stayed as one group and continued to spread the gospel and started the early church.

In a society where people tend to give up on each other and walk away from community when it stops 'working' for them, we have an opportunity in our groups to practice a counter-cultural way of relating to each other. Even when times get tough, if we keep Jesus as our focus, we can get through it and become even stronger!

- What are some ways our group can re-affirm our love and commitment to each other?

Conclusion

This Community Group **is** the Body of Christ, you are the church, alive and at work in the world today. Each person here is significant and important because God has placed us here. Therefore, let's not give up on each other. Instead, let's keep on learning how to love and encourage each other. In doing so, we get to declare God's love in a counter-cultural way. This is what the church is meant to be.

This is a challenging word for your Community Group, perhaps the most challenging one out of this study. However, be brave and ask God to guide you and your group through this process! I hope that, as God leads you in his love, you will discover the type of community He has called us to build.