

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



SUMMARY

Psalms 133, a 'Song of Ascents' traditionally sung by pilgrims traveling to Jerusalem for festivals. The psalm celebrates the goodness and beauty of God's people dwelling together in unity. JMT challenges the congregation to think of unity not merely as the absence of conflict, but as actively pursuing authentic relationships within the church community. Using vivid imagery of precious oil and refreshing dew, the psalm promises God's blessing and eternal life when believers genuinely live in harmony together.

The message emphasizes that Jesus prayed for unity among believers as a witness to the world, and that the church is designed to be God's family where members need one another. JMT provides practical guidance for building deeper relationships, including investing time beyond Sunday services, developing trust through character, chemistry, competency, and credibility, and being willing to be vulnerable with fellow believers rather than maintaining superficial 'church faces.'

INTRO PRAYER

Father, as we gather together today to study Your Word, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be receptive to Your Spirit's leading and to see beyond our own perspectives. Lord, we come with different backgrounds, experiences, and even different struggles, but we come as Your children. Unite our hearts around Your truth and help us to be honest and vulnerable with one another. Show us what it truly means to dwell together in unity, and give us the courage to pursue the authentic relationships You desire for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

ICE BREAKER

What's one place where you've experienced a really positive crowd or gathering - somewhere where people treated each other well despite the large number of people present?

KEY VERSES

- Psalm 133:1-3
- John 17:20-23
- 1 Corinthians 12
- Philippians 1:27-28

QUESTIONS

- JMT mentioned that the reason for gathering shapes how we treat one another. How does knowing we're gathered as God's family change the way we should interact with each other?
- Psalm 133 promises that when God's people dwell in unity, the Lord 'commands the blessing, life forevermore.' What do you think this blessing looks like in practical terms for a church community?
- Jesus prayed in John 17 that believers would be one 'so that the world may believe.' How does our unity (or lack thereof) affect our witness to non-believers?
- The sermon distinguished between 'absence of conflict' and true unity. Can you think of examples where healthy conflict actually strengthened a relationship?
- What barriers to unity do you see in your own life? What makes it difficult for you to pursue deeper relationships within the church?
- JMT mentioned that we often keep our 'church faces' on instead of being authentic. What would it look like to be more genuine in our church relationships while still being appropriate?
- Looking at the four elements of trust (character, chemistry, competency, credibility), which one do you find most challenging to develop or recognize in others?
- If you were to 'give up one thing to make space for one relationship' as the pastor suggested, what might that look like in your current season of life?

Life Application

This week, identify one person in the church community with whom you could build a deeper relationship. Take a concrete step toward that goal - whether it's having a conversation beyond Sunday morning pleasantries, inviting them for coffee, or simply asking how you can pray for them. Also, practice being more authentic in your church interactions by sharing one real (but appropriate) challenge or joy when someone asks how you're doing.

Key Takeaways

- Unity is about actively pursuing authentic relationships, not just avoiding conflict
- God promises blessing and eternal life when His people genuinely dwell together in harmony
- Jesus prayed for unity among believers as a witness to the world that He was sent by the Father
- The church is designed as God's family where members need one another and are equipped with different gifts
- Building trust requires attention to character, chemistry, competency, and credibility in relationships

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for this time together and for the reminder that You have called us to be more than just people who attend the same church - You've called us to be family. Help us to take seriously Your desire for unity among Your people. Give us courage to step out of our comfort zones and pursue authentic relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Show us where we need to lower walls of self-preservation and where we can be more generous with our time, attention, and vulnerability. Holy Spirit, bind us together in love and make us a sign to the world of Your transforming power. May our unity bring You glory and draw others to Jesus. In His precious name we pray, Amen.