



# Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

**NEW this year:** These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

## LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for the Sermon given on February 19, 2023

by Pastor Bryan Wilkerson

**"THOUGHT and PRAYERS?" - Ephesians 4:32, 1Corinthians 12:24b-26, Galatians 5:13, James 5:16**



Question: What does care mean and why is it so important?

Bottom Line: When we care for one another in *thought, word, and deed*, we invite the power and presence of God into our lives and community.

Today we come to the final message of our winter series exploring the risks and rewards of a With-Others Life. You can't be a disciple of Jesus or make a disciple of Jesus alone because discipleship and disciple making are relational endeavors. So, each week we've been focusing on the one-another teachings of the New Testament: *love* one another, *empathize* with one another, *speak* to one another, show *hospitality* to one another, *forgive* one another and *put one another first*.

In our final message of the series, we will see what the New Testament says about giving care to and receiving care from one another. We will also watch short video clips that will help us to understand what care looks like and feels like in real life.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

### **Main Scripture Reading:**

#### Ephesians 4:32

<sup>32</sup> Be *kind and compassionate* to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

#### 1Corinthians 12:24b-26

But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that *its parts should have equal concern for each other*. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

#### Galatians 5:13

<sup>13</sup> You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh<sup>[a]</sup>; rather, *serve one another* humbly in love.

#### James 5:16

<sup>16</sup> Therefore confess your sins to each other and *pray for each other* so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. Out of the four Scripture passages from today's reading, which passage specifically speaks to you? Share one key takeaway.
  - Ephesians 4:32
  - 1 Corinthians 12:24b-26
  - Galatians 5:13
  - James 5:13
2. Using the metaphor of two climbers that are roped together to make their way across a landscape, Pastor Bryan said that we were never meant to make the discipleship journey alone. In his words,

“Life can be unforgiving... It’s certainly not predictable, or safe. We were never meant to do it alone. That’s why God wired us for friendship, and romance, and partnership, and community.”

Pastor Bryan shares how following his father’s passing, both he and Karen felt comforted after receiving piles of sympathy cards from our church family. How can we as a church continually cultivate a community and culture that supports one another in our discipleship journey?

3. The video story of Cindy and Scott Santos revealed how hard it is for people who are experiencing hardships, pain, or grief to ask for help. Is there someone who is struggling whom you can serve and love with thoughts, prayers, and action? What are some ways you can care for that person?
4. There are many ways that you can give and receive care at Grace Chapel. If you have questions about any of these care groups, contact Sunny Toews @ [stoews@grace.org](mailto:stoews@grace.org)
  - (En)courage
  - Grief Share
  - Stephen Ministry
  - Nursing Home Ministry
  - Homebound Ministry
  - Food Bank
  - Benevolence Fund

Pastor Bryan reminds us that “caring for one another isn’t a program or a department, it’s a way of life for disciples and disciple-makers of Jesus.” Take a moment to pray that we become a community that exemplifies the lifestyle and posture of caring for one another.

5. One of the most powerful ways to care for another person is to PRAY for them. Spend some time lifting one another (group members) by name before the throne of God. Feel free to bring additional names before the Lord who are on your heart.

### **Homework Until Next Time:**

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

*We’re all on a journey; where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it’s not just good for us, it’s good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn’t come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;

- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

### Let's Pray

-----

**Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).**

### Teaching Points:

- “Be kind and compassionate to one another” from Ephesians 4:32 means that Christian caring has a beauty and genuineness about it that is uncommon and powerful. It comes from a deep place and it touches us in a deep way.
- The apostle Paul calls us to move toward people and their problems, to feel their pain and hurt, to care about what they are going through, and to think about how we might help. And to do so in ways that catch them by surprise
- One of the most powerful ways to care for another person is to pray for them. Lift them up by name before the throne of God, and invite God’s healing, helping presence in their lives. When you’re hurting or struggling, being prayed for doesn’t just feel good, it actually unleashes the power of God into that pain or struggle. It might make it go away or be easier to bear. Or it might make you stronger; draw you closer to Christ; enable you to bless others in and through your struggle.

### How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don’t feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.

- Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.