



## NEWS &amp; ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THIS WEEK:

## ⇒ PREPARATION FOR THIS WEEK:

- Do the homework and choose questions best suited to your group.
- Listen to the [Audio Guide/Podcast](#) for more discussion suggestions.

## ⇒ COVID UPDATE:

- As Dr. Henry has updated last week, we are now in the 'second wave' of the COVID-19 virus. While she is mostly concerned with intimate events like weddings, funerals, and family gatherings she is still encouraging British Columbians to **"Be kind. Be calm. Be safe."** We are now under an "order" to not gather more than 6 more people in our homes, in addition to the hosts.
- Now this week, we received a further "*recommendation*" in the Fraser Health region to not gather in homes at all. I encourage you all to make the adjustments to your meetings as you see fit, with this guidance:
  - [For smaller groups](#) – consider rotating out a couple per week, to get your numbers down to 8 in a single home.
  - [For larger groups](#) – consider dividing your group in two, where the facilitator takes half, and the host takes the other half.
  - Find other, larger spaces to meet in – consider spaces like storage barns, or covered patios. Maybe you have a space that other groups could also use – let me know and we'll share!
- A number of groups had made requests to meet at the church, in larger rooms. We have been able to accommodate some, but cannot accommodate any more.

## LEADER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

## ⇒ PICTURES!

- Have you done anything unique as a group? Be sure to share that with me via pictures!
- Remember the #hashtag challenge – posting your pictures on either Facebook or Instagram using #GatewayLifeGroups – to enter your group to win a prize of \$300! (possibly for a skipthedishes order for a social in December!)

## ⇒ SOCIALS:

- Have you planned out a SOCIAL event where your group can simply just enjoy each other's presence? Get everyone's minds together and plan something fun!

## ⇒ LIFE GROUP SERVE PROJECT:

- Be sure to follow through with the instructions that Pastor Marcel gives you to finalize the details of your SERVE project!

## LEADER INFORMATION:

## ⇒ WEEKLY LEADER TRAINING:

- Find the article "**ACTIVE LISTENING**" at the end of this guide.

## ⇒ ATTENDANCE:

- Submit your group's attendance online or in the Church Center App, or at: <https://gatewaycrc.churchcenter.com/groups/life-groups>. Be sure to **submit your attendance right away after your meeting**.
- If you have missed filling in your attendance for past events – please go back and fill them in! If those events were cancelled, please indicate that by clicking on the "cancel event" button.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

**LEADER NOTE:** As we continue to develop our relationships with each other, we will continue to provide simple ice breaker questions, one that is simple and fun, and one that relates more towards the topic and theme.

1) If you could go back in time—what advice would you give yourself when you were 13 years old?

**LEADER NOTE:** This is a question you can invite every voice in the room to contribute towards. Go around the room: either lead by example, or invite a confident member to start, but give your members some time to think!

2) Thinking back on the relationships you had, have you ever found a way to move from not getting along, to getting along with someone?

**LEADER NOTE:** This week we've spent some time hearing a message about getting along with others. Take sometime with your group, in a more light-hearted way, to consider your own relationships. We likely all have someone in our lives that we plain just don't get along with – is there anyone of us who have heard the challenge of the Holy Spirit to restore or rejuvenate those relationships, and have been able to do so?

## QUICK REVIEW

**LEADER NOTE:** These are two questions that have your group reflecting back upon last Sunday's message.

1) Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

**LEADER NOTE:** Be sure that you're leading by example, refer to your own notes and thoughts that you have collected. Help your members see the value in taking notes!

2) This past weekend, Pastor Justin talked about gentleness as "*being filled with grace, especially when you're right.*" How did that hit you?

## GOD'S STORY - TRIADS

**LEADER NOTE:** These are three questions that we ask each week, and have us look at each passage we study through the same lens.

**READ Ephesians 4:1-6**

**DISCUSSION TIP:** Because this reference is so short, why not take the opportunity with your group to hear it from a few different versions. Invite your members to share with versions they use, and hear as many different ones as you have in the room. If everyone has the same version – prepare ahead of time, and come with a few of your own. Think NIV, ESV, NLT, or even include The Message.

1) **GOD** - What does this passage say about the character of God?

2) **THE WORLD** - What does this passage say about fallen humanity?

3) **ME** - Where does this passage specifically expose sin or unbelief in my own life? How does it specifically call me to change my thinking, redirect my affections, replace my behaviors, and trust my Savior?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1) **READ Ephesians 4:1.** Paul is writing these next number of verses after praying the prayer in 3:14-22. In v.1, we begin to see that our "*walk*" or actions are a part of the way that the Great Commission is fulfilled. Why do you think that is true??

**LEADERS NOTE:** What is neat to see in these texts, is that Paul has just prayed that prayer – while he was primarily thinking of his audience in Ephesus, the Spirit preserved the words to form a prayer for the future church to (1) receive strength from the Holy Spirit, (2) to experience the foundational love of Christ, & (3) to experience the fullness of God. Now he says in 4:1 that Paul urges us "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling" – it sounds like he wants us to be the answer to his prayers – that we would live into the strength, the love, and the fullness from the Trinity – in order to be ambassadors of the trinity! Explore the ramifications of this all with your group!

**DISCUSSION TIP:** Go back and find the Great Commission text – it's Matthew 28:18-20.

- **READ James 2:14-19, 26.** How might your actions be the answers to your own prayers?

**LEADER NOTE:** James writes a pretty convicting piece of text here. While the goal is to not leave any of your members shrouded in guilt – work as a group to find ways in which we can all grow, improve, and become better servants of Christ.

2) **READ Ephesians 4:3.** Paul says "*make every effort*" or be "*eager to*" maintain unity by living a humble, gentle, patient, and loving life. Which area do you need to grow in the most?

**LEADER NOTE:** You may need to expand the reading from just v.3, to vs. 1-3, as verse three begins mid-sentence. This question highlights some of the textual differences between biblical versions, as the NIV says, "make every effort," and the ESV says, "be eager." While both phrases imply intentionality, they denote different attitudes. Ask this question:

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

- In these phrases, what are the differences you see?
- How do both angles challenge us?

- **READ Matthew 11:28-30.** How does Jesus' invitation give us the ability to live in the way that Paul is challenging?

**LEADER NOTE:** Jesus invites us to find those elements of humility and gentleness – in Him! He is the supreme example of how to live in these ways. Consider also Jesus' invitation to “let the children come to me” (Matthew 19:13-15). We see there an amazing picture of gentleness in a moment when the disciples were being exclusive and harsh.

- What do you think the world desires most from Christians? How can they best see those actions?

**LEADER NOTE:** This question can serve as a great segue into the next question. So if your intention is to also answer #3, don't spend a lot of time here. Or, if your discussion is flowing good, then perhaps as a leader lead your members to answer the third question while still here at the end of #2.

3) **READ Ephesians 4:4-6.** These verses draw out seven great unities, all which are grounded in the Trinity (“one Spirit,” “one Lord” [Jesus], “one God”). In how this was modelled, if we lived this perfectly, what would the church look like??

**LEADER NOTE:** Allow your group to dream about the unity of the church – there's really no wrong answer here. But as statements and comments are made, allow your group to experience the challenge that is set out for us all, as we strive to be the church that God is the head of.

## TAKING IT HOME

Given all of your time and discussion over the past few weeks that has been leading up to this point—what do you feel the Spirit of God leading you to do differently this week?

**LEADER NOTE:** Treat this question as a bit of a recap of your discussion. We always seek to approach scripture for life transformation – that's also one of the points and goals of our Life Group ministry – that we wouldn't just be a social club, but small groupings of people who are seeking life transformation. Let's then put to pen to paper with the ideas of how we need to live, now having had all this discussion!

**CLOSE YOUR MEETING:** Invite your members into a time of prayer, chatting through your on-going prayer needs, updating each other on where things are at! Be sure to in the midst of this, to offer prayers of gratitude & thanksgiving!

## ADDITIONAL SELF STUDY *(Optional Personal Reflection Questions)*

**LEADER NOTE:** As you know, these questions are completely optional for participants' personal reflection.

1) **READ Philippians 2:1-11.** Last week we looked at the Christ Hymn that Paul includes in his letter to the Philippian church. Now that we have heard Paul's prayer for the future church, and now this week, the call to “get along”, how does it strike you as Paul writes, “Let each of you not look only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others”?

2) **READ 1 Peter 5:1-10.** Peter is writing to the church who was scattered across many countries because of the faith that they had. In our current time and situation, we may feel similarly scattered—detached from each other. How do Peter's words here encourage you to keep on living in these trying months?

## GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PICTURES:** We are looking for pictures – from your meetings, upcoming serve projects, or socials! We want to put together a highlight video to be shown to our church after this Life Group semester wraps up. Please email them directly to pastor Adam – [adam@gatewaycrc.org](mailto:adam@gatewaycrc.org).

**HASHTAG CHALLENGE:** Be sure to encourage your group to use the #GatewayLifeGroups hashtag on Facebook and Instagram. Remember that there is going to be a \$300 gift card draw at the end of the semester. [One COVID tip – try to inspire the public sharing of photos that follow covid-19 protocols. Optics & perception play a role]

## "HOW TO GET ALONG WHEN YOU DON'T GET ALONG"

### A PLEA FOR UNITY:

- IT'S A **REQUIREMENT** NOT AN **OPTION**

### THREE THINGS:

1. JESUS COMMANDS IT

John 13:34-35

2. DISUNITY IS WHAT GOD HATES

Proverbs 6:16-19

3. JESUS PRAYS FOR IT

John 17:20-23

- IT'S NEVER EASY

Acts 13:36-41, Romans 12:18

### WHY IS UNITY SO HARD TO MAINTAIN?

1. **PRIDE**

2. **SELFISHNESS**

3. **IMPATIENCE**

Romans 14:1-3

### HOW TO GET ALONG WHEN WE DON'T GET ALONG

1. Be **HUMBLE**

2. Be **GENTLE**

Ephesians 4:2, Proverbs 29:11, Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Timothy 2:24-26

3. Be **PATIENT**

Proverbs 19:11





## ACTIVE LISTENING

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In our Life Groups, and in one-on-one conversations with our Life Group members – we need to be effective listeners. There are few things more validating to people than when others take the time to truly listen to them. Today, we're going to look at the five steps to active listening. These are non-verbal ways we tell another person "I'm listening and I'm interested in what you are saying."

These steps spell out the acronym SOLER and are:

- Squarely face the person
- Open your posture
- Lean towards the other
- Eye contact maintained
- Relax while attending

Let's walk through these. Some of these are more specific to a one-on-one conversation, but they can all be applied to a group setting as well.

**S:** Sitting squarely says, "I'm here with you, I'm available to you." In contrast, turning your body away from another person while you talk to him or her can lessen your degree of contact with that person. If, for any reason, facing the person squarely is too threatening for them, then an angled position may be more helpful. Sitting at more of a 5 o'clock position also helps to avoid the possibility of staring at them.

**O:** Adopt an open posture. Crossing your arms or your legs can be a sign of lessened involvement with or availability to others. An open posture says you are open to them and what they have to say. It is non-defensive in nature.

**L:** It can be helpful to lean slightly in towards the other person. It says, "I'm with you, I'm interested in you and what you have to say." Leaning back can suggest the opposite. However, it's important not to lean too far forward or you may be seen as placing a demand on them and they may find it intimidating.

**E:** Maintain good eye contact. It's another way of saying, "I'm interested, I'm with you." Remember this is not the same as staring. You will need to look away every so often, in order not to stare, but monitor the amount you look away. It could say something about your own level of comfort or discomfort.

**R:** Be relaxed or natural. If you are fidgeting nervously it will distract the other person. Being relaxed also tells them that you are comfortable with using your body as a vehicle of personal contact and expression. It helps put them at ease.

If you really want to recognize the importance of these, think through the opposite. Have you ever been leading a small group or in a meeting where someone is going on and on and you just want them to shut up? What do you do? You turn away, you avoid eye contact, you cross your arms –you do anything you can to hint to them that you are not interested. Right? We recognize the value of this when we want someone to stop talking. We need to also remember it and be intentional about it when we want someone to start or continue sharing. Some Things to Consider:

- Which of the active listening steps resonates most with you? How have you seen it at work in your own life?
- Which of the active listening steps seems most awkward to you? Why?
- If you were more intentional about active listening in your group, how would that impact it?
- If you were more intentional about active listening in one-on-one conversations, how would that impact them?