The Unity Project

CenterPoint Life Group Leader's Guide

The Unity Project

A group bible study based upon the book of Ephesians and the plan encapsulated in that book for the unification of the church.

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Introduction

by Pastor Kathy Smith D.M.

The *Unity Project* is divided into two segments in each session. We do suggest groups meeting monthly complete both segments each time you meet. The study can be utilized one segment at a time for those that meet more frequently.

This study includes video lectures from our pastoral staff to be followed by discussion utilizing the questions provided in this guide. Feel free to add your own questions as well.

Our goal is to provide a solid biblical foundation for the spiritual growth and maturing of the individual believer. Spiritual maturity helps forge the path to unity in the body of Christ. We trust that you will find this study both interesting and beneficial.

Session One

Introduction to the Unity Project

Welcome to the Unity project! The first half of this study is based upon Chapters 1-3 of Ephesians. These chapters help establish church doctrine. The second half of this study covers chapters 4 – 6. These latter three chapters explain the application of the doctrine.

Video one: The Unity Project Intro **Pastor Kathy**

In this video we will discuss:

- Paul's first recorded visit to Ephesus appears in Acts 18:19. During Paul's second missionary journey Paul left co-workers Aquila and Priscilla behind in Ephesus while he continued his travel to Caesarea.
- Paul returned to Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey and stayed almost 3 years. He left there to go to Macedonia, on his return voyage to Jerusalem he met with church leaders nearby one last time.
- AD 61 he was in a Roman prison and wrote a letter to the Ephesians. (the prison epistles)

Paul often used analogies to explain spiritual principles. He referred to the building of the church as one built upon a foundation of the teachings of the apostles and prophets. These teachings establish the doctrine upon which we are to build. Healthy spiritual growth is dependent upon having a secure foundation.

- Discuss building your faith upon tradition rather than building upon fresh spiritual revelation. How can that hinder your walk?
- What are some biblical examples of conflicts created when traditional beliefs differed from the biblical revelation taught by Jesus and his followers?
- How can understanding the difference between biblical traditions and sound doctrine help us to safely remain flexible to fresh revelation?

Video two: The Background Story by Pastor Rob

If we were living in Ephesus during Paul's day, what would we see, hear, feel, and experience there?

- Geographically
- Culturally
- Economically
- Spiritually
- Who is Diana/Artemis? What is her significance in the events that transpired in Ephesus?
- Finally, what made Ephesus a significant location for the spread of the gospel to other locations?

See Acts chapters 18 and 19 for additional background information. Check our website for additional resource links and the videos that go with these teachings.

Our website can be found at https://centerpointflint.com/

Session Two

The Significance of Mentors

Session two of our study will focus on the relational background of people who influenced the move of God in Ephesus. In addition to Paul, we also have Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos. Later both Timothy and John became involved in working with the church in Ephesus. How significant is the role of a mentor in the advancing of the gospel?

Video one: **Pastors Diego and Hermelin**

Relationships can transform the individual lives of believers. Such transformation changes individuals but it also helps mature the body of Christ. Paul's relationship with Aquila and Priscila did just that.

Video two: **Pastors Diego and Hermelin**

The relationship between Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos influenced the transformation of the church. Why did Apollo's visit to Corinth trigger a letter of correction by Paul?

- Discuss the role of mentors in the transformation of the church.
- How important do you feel mentor relationships are to the church today?
- Have you been mentored by anyone? If so, how did that benefit you?
- Have you considered mentoring others? How might that fit into your present lifestyle and calling?

Session Three

Our Spiritual Inheritance

Now we can jump into the text armed with the background story behind the letter Paul wrote to his beloved Ephesians. First read chapter one of Ephesians, then proceed with viewing the videos for this session.

Video one*: Location, location, location*

Pastors Kyle and Amanda talk about being **"In Christ**" It is all about being in the right location (In Christ) rather than in the world. It sets us up to inherit blessings.

Video 2: *Discovering one's identity*,

Pastor Peggy shares that Paul's prayer for the Church is for spiritual blessings. These blessings reveal their identity in Christ. We will learn about:

- The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation.
- The opening of our eyes.
- Miracle working power.
- What it means to be seated with him in heavenly places.

What does it mean to be adopted as sons and daughters and how does that set us up to inherit blessings?

Discuss your understanding of each bullet point above and its significance. How do these points relate to discovering one's identity in Christ and contributing to the body?

Session Four

A Snapshot View

Most of us have seen "before" and" after" photos, chapter two of Ephesians gives us a similar snapshot view. It is the before and the after of the chosen of God. It portrays us in our fallen state, and it documents the desired transformation that follows when we receive Christ. Read chapter two of Ephesians before proceeding to the video content. Follow with discussion on the points suggested below.

Video 1: Resurrection of the Dead by **Pastor Bruce**

- Discuss the difference between spiritual death and physical death.
- Can we earn spiritual resurrection? If not, how is it obtained?
- What is the significance of circumcision in the Old Testament?
- What is spiritual circumcision?

Video 2: The Two become One by **Pastor Rob**

- Explain how Jesus made peace between the Gentiles and the Jews?
- Discuss what is meant by the "Covenants of Promise" and to whom does the covenant belong?
- Why were the Gentiles referred to as the uncircumcised?
- What is meant by the two becoming one in Christ?
- What does Paul mean that we were created for good works?

Session Five

Paul Shines the Light of Truth

This chapter begins by discussing the stewardship of Paul to reveal the big mystery, the one that was hidden for centuries. In fact, he says that he is the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of the Gentiles. Read chapter three of Ephesians and view the videos. Follow with discussion on the points suggested below.

Video 1: What is the Big Secret? **By Pastor Peggy**

- Why Paul? What qualified him to receive the revelation?
- What was the "gift of grace" given to Paul?
- What was the eternal purpose of God accomplished "**in Christ**."
- Why did Paul refer to his tribulations as their (the Ephesians) glory?

Video 2: Paul's Prayer of Blessing and conclusion of the first half of the course**. By Pastor Kathy**

- What are the "riches of glory" that Paul is referring to in the later part of this text?
- What does it mean to be filled up with the fullness of God? How does this filling of our vessel relate to the process of maturing spiritually?

The completion of the first three chapters might be likened to laying the foundation of your faith. Stay tuned for part two! It is time to build upon that truth and forge the path to unity.

Session Six

Growing up and Fitting Together

Ephesians chapter four includes attitudes that lead to unity, the gifts of the son for building up and equipping of the body, and transformation from the old man to the new. View the videos followed by discussion as outlined below.

Video 1: How Do We Attain Unity? **By Pastor Bruce**

- How does being people of the new creation affect the relationships we have with one another in the body?
- What is the five-fold ministry? How should Paul's statement of it's purpose be reflected in our relationship and response to church leaders?
- How does our maturity being "measured by the standards of the king's fullness" impact your view of how a person in the body of Christ is meant to grow and relate to others in the church and the world?
- What are joints? What does Paul mean by "fit and held together"? Discuss what happens when a part is not "working properly (4:16)? How might we respond to that?

Video 2: The Apostle Paul Instructs, Put Off, Put On, and Let. **By Pastor Peggy**

- These are intentional words. What are some things we need to **put off** and why?
- Once we dispose of the old, what does Paul tell us to **put on**?
- The putting off and putting on are a process. Could you explain this process and the implications to a new believer?
- Finally, the process of "letting" leads to what according to Paul?

Session Seven

Imitators and the Great Marriage Mystery

Read chapter five of Ephesians then watch the following videos and discuss the concepts presented in each one.

Video 1: Becoming Imitators of God to Shine Forth His Light**. By Pastor Rob**

- Discuss how to keep walking in love toward others while maintaining healthy boundaries. Share some examples and challenges.
- Paul talks about separating from the deeds of darkness and bearing fruit of the light. Share how you may need to apply this in public places, in private places, with family and friends.
- Paul says we need to make the most of our time and be wise regarding God's will. In what ways are you walking out his advice?
- What did Paul mean by being subject to one another?

Video 2: Marriage concepts that foreshadow Christ and His Church. **By Pastors Kyle and Amanda**

- What does Paul mean by wives be subject to your husband? How might you apply this principle today?
- What is meant by husbands love your wife as your own body?
- What are some guidelines for newlyweds regarding leaving the father and mother and cleaving to the wife. Give some illustrations on how to apply this concept.
- What is the great marriage mystery that Paul spoke of (see verse 32)?

Session Eight

Family Dynamics and the Armor of God

Our focus this month is developing skills and attitudes for successful family relationships and as members of God's family. Please read chapter six of Ephesians before proceeding.

Video 1: Healthy Family Dynamics and Parenting Our Children. **By Pastors Josh and Becky**

- "Honor thy father and mother which is the first commandment with promise." What promise is Paul referring to in this passage?
- Discuss what "provoking to anger" equates to in society today. How do we discipline without provoking our children to anger?
- Discuss how we can apply the principles of Godly slave and master relationships in today's cultural environment.
- Discuss the consequences of being obedient as a man pleaser.

Video 2: Donning the armor to successfully navigate the challenges of life as children of God. **By Pastor Kathy**

- Discuss the challenge of responding and not reacting when others hurt or take advantage of us. How is it helpful to pinpoint the true enemy in everyday situations such as this?
- Discuss each of the pieces of armor and their importance in our spiritual battles.
- Paul talks about being an ambassador in chains. What does he mean by ambassador? How do we become modern day ambassadors?

Conclusion

Project Unity: Becoming One in Christ

This is the culmination of our study on the book of Ephesians. Over the past year we have learned concepts of church doctrine that create an environment for unity. In addition, we have discussed how to successfully apply the principles to our life and to our church. In Romans, it tells us that there are many members but just one body, the body of Christ. He is the head and we come together to create his body.

Coming together as one is no small task. Therefore, Jesus gave us the gift of the five-fold ministry to equip and build us up, allowing each member to mature and take their proper place. Being in the proper place is only the first step, we must then effectively interact with one another through healthy relationship driven ministry to fulfill God's plan. We have been equipped with Holy Spirit gifts to use as tools to fulfill each need. We need each other as none of us are complete without the other members.

Final Thoughts

- After viewing the final video, discuss any potential hinderances, roadblocks, or concerns.
- How can we as a local body of believers become more effective in overcoming these and begin to move forward to the goal of unity?
- How do you define unity and how would you measure our progress toward this goal?

Our Instructors

Pastors Kyle and Amanda Bailey	Pastor Bruce Garner
Pastors Diego and Hermelin Barrios	Pastor Rob Mattiuzzo
Pastor Peggy Norton	Pastor Kathy Smith
Pastors Josh and Becky Wheeler	