

- Name, through His Spirit He is present with you?
- In what ways has Christ's presence through His Spirit become more real to you by being in community with others?
- In what ways has your group become the hands and feet and presence of Christ to you?
- Read Colossians 3:12-14. The theme of our series is "Togetherness" but another word for this used in Scripture is the word "unity"--the unity that comes within a community that loves God and loves each other. Jesus described this in John 17 and Paul uses the word in this passage. What are some of the characteristics or community virtues that Paul lists in this passage that can sustain unity/togetherness? Are there other important virtues you would add to his list that sustain our life together in community?
- Paul stated that above all of these virtues "put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Col. 3:14). John Wesley in one of his sermons stated similarly that the purpose of being in community was to "Watch over one another in love." How are we as a group showing these virtues that Paul lists of unity/togetherness to one another?
- How can we become better as a community of friends at watching over one another in love?

Together in Service

The writer and spiritual director, Mindy Caliguire, has noted that "Great things can be accomplished through strong friendships centered on a common love for God. Can you imagine the energy that would be unleashed for the kingdom of God if more and more mature believers were to become friends?" (Mindy Caliguire, *Stir*, 131). A group that is growing together as friends will naturally overflow into serving others, and in so doing they unleash great power to build for the kingdom of God.

- The flip side of this is that in serving together memories are formed and friendships together are deepened. One group leader noted that in serving with members of his group, conversations opened up about life that never would have happened in just a regular group meeting. We have groups that serve together in our Special Needs ministry, in the Hands of Christ, in our Homeless ministry and many other ways. We even have a group who serve together by making blankets for critically ill patients.

- How are you serving together as a group?
- What are some ways you would like to serve together as a group?
- What are some ministries of our church that you would like to support through your service as a group?
- How has serving together brought you closer as a group?
- If you would like help in identifying service opportunities you can email our Group Life team at grouplife@fmcm.org.

CLOSING PRAYER

If you have not already done so, take some time to take down prayer requests and pray over these needs together. Be sure to email these out to your group members so that you can be praying "together" for one another throughout the week. Close your time by reading and praying together Psalm 133.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- The Bible Project Video Series on Ecclesiastes: <https://youtu.be/lrsQ1tc-2wk>
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship* (Harper, 1954).
- Mindy Caliguire, *STIR: Spiritual Transformation in Relationships* (Zondervan, 2013)
- Derek S. Kidner, *The Message of Ecclesiastes* (The Bible Speaks Today; IVP Academic, 1984).
- Tremper Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Eerdmans, 1997).
- John Wesley, "Advice to a People Called Methodists" <https://www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/The-Wesleys-and-Their-Times/Advice-to-a-People-Called-Methodist>