



Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!

If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions towards the end of the document.

- These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. The Journey Resources
- IV. Support for the Leader

How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** 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.
4. **Ask Questions:** 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.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

If your group meets over Zoom:

- Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

Group Leader Support:

- Please reach out to your Campus Pastor 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 Ghali](#).

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for Sermon given on June 23, 2024
by Pastor Ruthie Seiders

PARTNERS IN UNITY – Philippians 4:1-3



I. Introduction

As we have been studying Paul's letter to the Philippians over the last few weeks, we have been focusing on this concept of partnership. *Partners in the Gospel, In God-Given Courage, In Humility, and in Perseverance*. This week, we will look at what should be obvious as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and yet is often one of the most challenging and damaging to our ability to win others to the joy of following Jesus: the call to be Partners in Unity. Paul addresses this head-on in the fourth chapter of his letter to this group of believers he so deeply loves.

Questions: What does partnering with our brothers and sisters in Christ look like?

Bottom Line: Partners in unity love Jesus, love one another, and love the mission, linking arms to accomplish it.

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

Main Scripture Readings: Philippians 4:1-3

4 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

II. **Group Discussion Questions:**

1. In Philippians 4:2-3, Paul pleads with Euodia and Syntyche to reconcile their differences for the sake of the growing church.
 - Have you ever found yourself in the role of peacemaker, mediating a disagreement between two dear friends?
 - Ask the group if they have been in a similar situation and how that made them feel.
2. Unfortunately, conflict in the Christian community is not new; even the early church struggled with disunity.
 - Why do you think pursuing unity has always been such a challenge, even for people who are focusing on the love of Jesus?
3. Pastor Ruthie shared a personal story of a church she had previously pastored, where there was a growing division between those who attended the traditional and the contemporary worship services.
 - Take a few minutes to think about any current issues of disagreement that you have observed or that you foresee could lead to animosity and division.
 - What do you feel are the ingredients of disunity?
 - What do you think are the essential factors for Christ-followers to pursue unity?
4. Read Philippians 2:5 together:

"In your relationship with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus..."

One commentator explains it this way: "Having the attitude of Christ emphasizes the unity that should exist among Christians, not uniformity of thought, but the common disposition to work together and to serve one another."

- How can you prioritize the church community over individual ideas or preferences?
5. The idea of self-sacrificing for the good of the team is nothing new. As you close in prayer, consider the various teams you are a part of: family, school, work, neighborhood, church, etc. In which one of these teams are you feeling discord or even animosity? Think about something specific that you can do to prioritize the group. Perhaps you need to apologize or compromise, or maybe like Paul, you are called to be a peacemaker, to plead for reconciliation. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance.

Take Home Message:

With the palpable tension and daily discord of modern society and politics, coupled with the recent change in senior leadership at Grace Chapel, we find ourselves in a critical moment in the life of our church. *If we seek to be united around our mutual love for Jesus, our gratitude for the new life he has given each of us, and the mission to which he has called us there is no limit to what God can do in and through us for the good of the world.*

Let's Pray**III. The Journey**

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 is 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.

Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

IV. **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 opportunities in the life of our church.

Teaching Points:

- Unity emerges from a shared love for Jesus
- Unity emerges from a shared love for one another
- Unity emerges from a shared love for the mission
- Excerpts from the Grace Chapel church covenant for church members:
 - I believe that the Holy Spirit has drawn us together, in community which is characterized by the love of Christ
 - Together with other followers of Jesus, I will pursue the ways of forgiveness and reconciliation, and, as Jesus taught, to do so as quickly as possible

Supplementary Scripture:

Philippians 2:3-5

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Matthew 22:37-40

³⁷ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’^[a] ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b] ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

John 13:34-35

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”