

Small Group Discussion Guide

Perilous Waters | *Navigating the Dangerous Currents Shaping the Church*

Part 5: Authority Without Abuse

BIG Idea: The community Christ calls us into is not something to consume and discard, but a people to love, serve, and remain faithful to—even when relationships become difficult.

Application: Stop evaluating your church merely by what you receive from it. Learn to love, forgive, serve, and remain faithful to the people Christ has called you to share life with.

Discussion Questions

Icebreaker: What is something you've canceled, replaced, or switched because it wasn't meeting your expectations—a streaming service, restaurant, or something else? What makes relationships different?

1. Read **Romans 12:4–5**. Paul says we belong to one another. What does that mean beyond attending the same church service? What might it look like during an ordinary week?
2. The sermon says, “Church membership is not a subscription to religious services.” How can we recognize when we are approaching church mainly as consumers? What helps us become people who contribute to community?
3. Read **Colossians 3:12–14**. Which quality in this passage is hardest for you to practice when someone disappoints you? What is one way you could practice it this week?
4. “You can change your community without changing your character.” Without naming other people, what is one habit or reaction you have discovered you need to work on in relationships?
5. Read **Ephesians 4:2–3**. What does making an effort to preserve unity look like when people disagree? What helps you listen, ask questions, and avoid assuming the worst?
6. The sermon says, “We cannot demand grace while refusing accountability.” What makes an apology meaningful? How can we encourage forgiveness while taking wrongdoing seriously and protecting people from harm?
7. Read **Acts 2:42–47**. Which part of the believers’ shared life would you like to see grow in our LifeGroup? What is one realistic step we could take together?
8. Read **John 13:34–35**. How might the way Christians treat one another affect someone who is exploring faith? When have you seen someone’s love help you recognize the character of Jesus?
9. What is one healthy accountability response God may be asking of you this week — healing from past church hurt, becoming more open to biblical correction, strengthening your, or praying for and encouraging those entrusted with spiritual leadership?
10. Think about the Big Idea: We are a people to love, serve, and remain faithful to — even when relationships become difficult. What is your next step this week? How can this group encourage you and follow up?

Prayer Prompt: Thank Jesus for loving and forgiving us first. Ask the Holy Spirit to help us love our church family with patience, humility, and faithfulness. Pray for courage to apologize, wisdom to address conflict honestly, and healing for those who have been hurt. Ask God to help us recognize practical needs and support one another.