

2026-08-19 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: Church as Family

Overview

This guide is based on a sermon exploring what it means to be the church as a genuine family -- unified not because we are identical, but because we are bound together through worship and trust in God. Drawing from Nehemiah, Acts 2, and Ephesians 2, the sermon challenges us to tear down the walls we build between one another and to take the practical, sometimes uncomfortable steps of truly knowing each other.

Key Takeaways

Unity is not uniformity. The Israelites who rebuilt Jerusalem's wall came from vastly different backgrounds -- priests, merchants, goldsmiths, daughters -- yet they worked and worshipped as one. Being "one" means sharing a common mindset of devotion to God, not being identical people.

Calling each other brothers and sisters changes how we act. Throughout Nehemiah 1-6, the people are called brothers. That language shaped how they fought for one another and how they worked alongside one another.

Worship precedes growth. In Acts 2, when the early believers refocused from activity to devoted worship, fellowship, prayer, and the breaking of bread, God added to their numbers. The growth was a result of the posture, not the other way around.

Christ has already torn down the dividing wall. Ephesians 2 reminds us that the barriers between people -- background, generation, history -- have been dismantled by Christ. The question is whether we will live as though that is true.

You cannot be one with someone whose name you do not know. Becoming a family requires the small, practical, sometimes awkward first step of showing up for one another.

Discussion Questions

Opening (Getting to Know Each Other)

Share your name with the group and one thing about yourself that most people here might not know.

What is one word you would use to describe your experience of "family" -- either in your biological family or in a church community?

Digging into the Sermon

Nehemiah united people from completely different roles and backgrounds -- priests, merchants, women, laborers -- to build the wall together. What made that kind of unity possible, and what would have made it difficult?

The people in Nehemiah consistently referred to one another as brothers, even across different family lines. How does the language we use to describe one another shape how we actually treat one another?

The sermon drew a distinction between being "one" and being identical -- using the example of a Rubik's cube where each person only sees one side. What perspective do you bring to this community that others might not see? What perspectives do you feel like you are missing?

In Acts 2, the early church devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer -- and then God added to their numbers. Why do you think the growth followed the worship rather than the other way around?

Ephesians 2 says that Christ has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility between people. Where do you still feel walls -- either walls you have put up or walls that exist between you and others in this community?

Personal Reflection

The speaker shared that during a painful season, it was the people in this community who helped him see the love of God more clearly. Has there been a time when another person in the church was the way you experienced

God's grace? What did that look like?

Is there anything from your past experience of family -- hurt, loss, conflict, or distance -- that makes it hard to fully step into a church community? You do not have to share details, but is that something you are carrying?

The sermon ended with a challenge to go talk to someone you do not normally speak with. What is one honest reason that feels difficult, and what would it take to do it anyway?

Practical Applications

This Week -- Take One Step Toward Someone Identify one person in your church community whose name you either do not know or barely know. Make it your goal this week to have a real conversation with them. Ask them what a high and a low from their week has been, and actually listen.

This Month -- Widen the Table Think about the rhythms of your life -- meals, commutes, free time. Is there a way to invite someone from a different generation, background, or life stage into one of those spaces? Shared meals and ordinary moments were central to the early church in Acts 2.

Ongoing -- Pray for Someone by Name Choose one person from your group or your broader church community and commit to praying for them by name each day for the next month. Consider letting them know you are doing it.

For the Group -- Honest Check-In Make it a regular practice in your group to ask: What is something you are carrying right now that the rest of us do not know about? Families who stay together make space for honest answers to that question.

Closing Reflection

The sermon reminded us that the wall in Nehemiah was rebuilt not because the task was manageable, but because the people worshipped together and called each other brothers. The enemies surrounding them saw the finished

wall and were afraid -- not because of the Israelites' skill, but because they knew no one could have done this without God.

The same is true of a church that actually functions as a family. When people from completely different backgrounds, generations, and experiences become genuinely one -- not because they are the same, but because they share a devotion to God -- the world around them takes notice.

The first step is not complicated. It starts with learning someone's name.

Sermon delivered at Little Seed Church. Based on Nehemiah 1-8, Acts 2:42-47, and Ephesians 2:11-22.