



Made For More Community Sep 9: One With His People

Series Summary: Groups begin with time to connect. We're not just here to sit in a circle. We're here to know others and be known by others. Second, we open our Bibles together. We don't just study information. We want to know and live the Word of God. Third, we open our hands to serve and care for one another. In a small group, everyone matters, and everyone contributes. There is no such thing as a spectator.

Big Idea: Our relationship with Jesus, and then our relationships with other brothers and sisters is about unity. Unity is more than just being in the same place at the same time.

Schedule:

- Live teaching
- Small group

LIVE TEACHING

Series Lead in:

Opening: When have you experienced a group or team that felt truly united? What made it work? What usually makes it hard for people to stay connected over time?

- The team or group that feels most united is when they share a common interest or goal in mind.
- The one that feels disconnected is because not everyone is on the same page. Different personal agendas get in the way.

Tonight: We will find that church community is more fruitful when we remember that Jesus is one with his people, and we filter that truth towards other people.

ONE WITH HIS DISCIPLES

Context Reminder: Jesus is hours from the cross. As we learned last week, He prayed for Himself as He went to the cross, and he prayed that His disciples would be one with God as they grow to know Him. Now, He expands His prayer. This is where you and I enter the prayer.

John 17:20 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

THEM - the disciples

THOSE WHO WILL BELIEVE - across all generations and times, Jesus is praying for every believer.

THROUGH THEIR MESSAGE - same Gospel saves all who believe; message never changes.

Have you believed in Jesus for eternal life? Then, Jesus is praying for you! What is He praying for? What does Jesus want every believer to know and to experience?

John 17:21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

- He prays that we would be one. One with each other, and one with Him.

“One” (Greek: hen)

- Not all the same
- But unified (one Savior, one Faith, one Spirit, one Purpose)

Just as Jesus and God are one, we are called to be one with other believers. To understand the call of the Biblical community, you have to understand the relationship between the Father and the Son.

- 3 Persons One God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- Perfect Relationship: United in Love
- Different Roles: Same Mission

When Jesus prays that believers will be one, He is praying that:

- Different but Same: Different people will form one body, His church.
- Relationally Connected: The church will be united in love.

- On Mission: The church will be united in mission, with each person playing their role

Jesus is praying that we move past convenient connections, and toward Biblical community. This community isn't because of our commitment to one another alone. It's because we are in Christ, and He unites us.

- **Biblical community sees the benefit of different people:** People different than me can help me know God in different ways.
- **Biblical community invites us to respond in love as we live united:** This is the love that forgives freely and supports fully. It is also the love that speaks the truth in love because love requires truth.
- **Biblical community compels us to be united in our mission,** with each one of us playing our part on God's team. None is on the sidelines. We are all engaged in making disciples.

Right now, as your group is forming, you may be wondering:

Do I fit in this group? Remember what unites us. It's not our age or life stage...it's not the sports we play...it's not the school we attend... It's our Savior.

- Don't give up! Keep coming. Get to know the group. Be known by the group. And watch God work.

What's my role in this group? Even if you aren't the leader of the group, each person in the group has a role.

- Maybe you are the encourager who gives a helpful word at the right time.
- Maybe you are the Bible student who helps others understand and apply truth.
- Maybe you are the organizer who will help the group connect outside of group time and serve together.
- Remember, in a Biblical community, we all have a role to play based on our gifts and the group's needs. My hope is that over the next few weeks, you will know your role in the group and that God will use you!

Transition: This almost sounds too good to be true. Is God really building His people to be united, loving, and making a difference together? This is exactly what Jesus prayed for. But how is possible?

WE ARE ONE IN JESUS' IMAGE

John 17:22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—

- "Glory" (Greek: doxa)

- Not fame or spotlight
- But life, character, and the presence of God

Everything Jesus did on earth was because of His relationship with God. And get this, Jesus says here that He has given us the same relationship with God.

We can be one with each other, because we are one with Him. Unity is not something we create. It is something we live out because of what we've been given by Jesus.

John 17:23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

- Unity among believers is one of the distinguishing marks and powerful displays of the Gospel.
- That's why, in John 17:23, Jesus invites us into a different level of relationship with each other. He invites us to move from casual connection to a united Biblical community.

Here's what I mean: you will make friends in the group or deepen friendships, but you are building more than just friendships.

- You are building your place in the body of Christ. You are building brothers and sisters who are deeply committed to one another and to the mission of Jesus.
- You were made for more than just friendships. You were made to live in oneness with other believers in Jesus, and this group is a part of that.

Transition to Groups: Tonight, we're going to discuss more about our own individual roles within the group, but also discuss the key aspects of unity in a church setting.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Leader Note: Leaders, feel free to give any personal advice from past experiences; whether it be good experiences or bad. Giving experiential wisdom to your students could truly benefit your group.

1. **What role do you naturally play in a group? (encourager, organizer, teacher, leader, listener)**

READ: John 17:20-23 TOGETHER AS A GROUP

2. **Why do you think Jesus made unity amongst believers such a big priority?**

Leader Note: It may help to remind the group that John 17 is Jesus' prayer right before he is taken captive. His time left on earth is drawing to a close. This means that what He chooses to pray for should be viewed as of the most importance.

3. **Vs 23. Jesus prayed that we would not only be unified but have a “complete unity” that reflected God’s love and unity. What makes unity difficult in real life? What things most hinder us from experiencing the kind of “complete unity” Jesus envisioned for us?**
4. **What do you think are the most harmful or detrimental aspects to affecting unity within the church?**

Leader Note: This is fine for students to share if they have seen or experienced wrongs in the church, but do not let it turn into a time of gossip or slander. Hold off on any names being said if a student wants to open up or share.

5. **How is it possible to have genuine unity with other people when you don’t agree about everything?**
6. **What would it look like for this group to move from connection to true community? What commitments do we need to make to each other?**

PRAYER

Spend time praying together. Ask for prayer requests and pray for the group’s current needs. Also, pray for the group to grow deeper in their relationships with one another. Ask God to grow this group in their commitment to one another as we meet together. Ask God to help each group member take risks to trust one another.