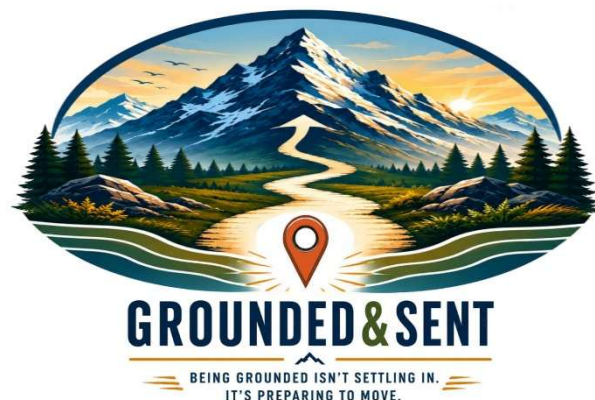


“One Body, Many Callings”

Session 4: Ephesians 4:1–16

Movement: Grown

Theme: Calling is communal before it is individual — and you can’t fully become who God made you to be alone.



Leader’s Notes:

Goal: 100% participation – everyone talks.

Prioritize ★ questions. These make up the central theological themes. In time constraints unstarred questions can be skipped. A great conversation on two or three questions is better than a rushed one on five.

Sessions 1–3 built the foundation: who you are in Christ, what God did to make you alive, and how belonging to God means belonging to each other. Session 4 is the hinge between the Grounded and Going movements. Paul has established identity. Now he turns to calling — but notice that he doesn’t start with individual purpose or personal gifts. He starts with unity. Before he says a single word about what you are called to do, he tells you what you are called to be: humble, gentle, patient, and bearing with one another in love. Calling in Ephesians is never a solo project.

This session is also where the Brazos Pointe mission language lands most naturally. Discover, develop, deploy. Ephesians 4:11-12 is the biblical backbone of that framework — leaders equipping people for works of service so that the body grows. Your group members are sitting in the “develop” phase of that right now. This session is a chance to help them see why development is never just for their own benefit. It’s always for the body.

LOOKING AHEAD — Group Mission Statement:

Over the coming weeks, your group will be asked to develop a short group mission statement together — a sentence or two that captures who you are, what God has been doing among you, and where you sense He is sending you as a community. You don’t need to do anything with this tonight. Just plant the seed using the “Say It” section right before the “Do It” section. That’s it. No assignment. No worksheet. Just an open question left in the room. Groups who begin noticing what they exist for will arrive at Session 7 with something real to say.

Check-In | *DO IT follow-up from Session 3 • ~3 minutes*

Leader note: Keep this brief. If anyone chose “Pray the Prayer” last week, this is a natural moment to ask what shifted for them over seven days of praying Ephesians 3:14-21. If anyone chose “Take Down a Wall,” a sentence or two about what they did is worth hearing. Receive it and move on.

1. Last week you chose a Do It option. Did anyone try theirs? What happened . . . or what got in the way?

OPEN IT | *Icebreaker • ~5 minutes*

Leader note: This question is light and often funny — people love talking about teams they’ve been part of where everyone’s role was different but necessary. Keep it to two or three responses. What you’re listening for is the instinct that different contributions make something stronger, not weaker. That instinct becomes the key idea of the session.

2. What’s the best team you’ve ever been part of — a work team, a sports team, a family pulling together in a crisis, even a really good group of friends? What made it work? Was everyone doing the same thing?

Let two or three people share. The answers will almost always include something about different people contributing different things. Nobody will say “we all did the same thing and that’s what made it great.” That intuition is the setup for Paul’s argument about the body in 4:7-16. Don’t make the connection yet — just let it surface.

READ IT | *Scripture • ~4 minutes*

Say it:

We’ve been grounded in who we are.

Now Paul tells us how to walk. And before he talks about what we do, he talks about how we do it.

Leaders Note: Ask a volunteer to read 4:1-6. This is the beginning of the second half of Ephesians — the hinge between identity & action. Note the word “therefore” in verse 1. Paul’s whole ethical argument flows from what he’s already established in chapters 1–3.

Context Note: Paul opens chapter 4 with “I urge you . . . as a prisoner.” He’s not giving advice from a position of comfort or authority. He’s writing from chains — and he’s urging people to walk worthy of a calling that cost him everything. The humility, gentleness, and patience he describes in verses 2–3 aren’t soft virtues. They’re the disciplines of people who have genuinely been grounded in something bigger than themselves.

- Ephesians 4:1-6

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~10 minutes

★3. Paul lists five qualities in verses 2–3 that maintain the unity of the Spirit: humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another in love, and making every effort for peace. Which of these is hardest for you personally . . . and which one do you think would fill a need in your group, your family, or your workplace right now?

This question works on two levels simultaneously: personal honesty and communal awareness. Let people answer both parts if they can. What you’re listening for is the gap between the qualities Paul describes and the qualities people actually experience in community — including this small group. That gap isn’t an indictment. It’s the very reason Paul is writing. These aren’t qualities you produce by trying harder. They’re the fruit of people who have been genuinely grounded in the identity established in chapters 1–3. If time allows, a gentle follow-up: “Which of these do you think the people around you would say you bring most naturally?”

Sticky phrase: (Use these to help your group remember what they learn) “**How you walk together matters as much as where you’re going.**”

4. Paul tells believers to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit” (v.3), not to create it. Then he reminds them of seven things they already share in Christ (vv.4–6). Why do you think Paul starts there? How might remembering those shared realities change the way you respond when relationships become difficult?

This is a theology question with immediate practical application. Most people approach church unity as something fragile that has to be carefully maintained by avoiding conflict or keeping everyone happy. Paul says something different: the unity already exists in the Spirit. The calling is to “make every effort” not to create it, but to keep it. That’s a completely different orientation. It means conflict doesn’t threaten the unity — the refusal to bear with one another does. This can be a relieving idea for people who feel exhausted by the pressure to keep the peace. You’re not holding the unity together. You’re living inside it.

Sticky phrase: **“Unity is a gift to protect, not a goal to achieve.”**

READ IT | Scripture • ~3 minutes

Say it:

So we share one foundation. But Paul isn’t finished — because within that unity, every person has been given something different.

Leaders Note: Ask a different volunteer to read 4:7-16. Encourage them to read slowly through the list in verses 11–12 — the roles Paul names there are worth landing on one at a time.

Context Note: Verse 8 quotes Psalm 68:18, which originally described a conquering king distributing plunder to his people after a victory. Paul applies it to Christ: the risen, ascended King distributing gifts to his church. The gifts in verse 11 — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers — are not titles or ranks. They are functions given to the body for one specific purpose: “to equip his people for works of service.” The leaders exist to equip the people, and everyone else exists to do the work. That’s the whole model. This is the biblical basis for Brazos Pointe’s discover, develop, deploy mission statement — and it’s worth naming that connection for your group.

- Ephesians 4:7-16

EXPLORE IT | Discussion • ~16 minutes

★5. Verse 7 says “to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.” Not some of us. Not the especially gifted ones. Each one. What do you think your contribution to the body actually is . . . and have you ever been told, told yourself, or felt that what you bring doesn’t count?

This question has two parts and both matter. The first is an honest self-assessment — what do you actually contribute? Some people will answer quickly and confidently. Others will go quiet, and that silence is important. Many people in your group have never been told specifically what they bring to the body. Take a moment to tell them what you see. Some have been told — explicitly or implicitly — that what they bring isn’t the kind of thing the church values. Let people name that and speak encouragement over them honestly. The second part of the question is where the pastoral weight is. People who feel their contribution doesn’t count tend to stop contributing — and the body loses something it can’t replace. Paul’s argument in this passage is that the body needs every part functioning. No gift is decorative.

Sticky phrase: “In Christ, no one is just for decoration; everyone has a part to play.”

★6. Verses 11–12 say leaders exist “to equip his people for works of service.” The leaders aren’t the ones doing the work — they’re the ones preparing everyone else to do it. How does it change your understanding of your own role in the church when you realize the “works of service” aren’t reserved for staff or volunteers in official roles . . . but for you, wherever you are?

This is one of the most practically important questions in the series. A lot of people in your group have a consumer posture toward the church without knowing it — they attend, they receive, and they occasionally help when asked. Paul’s model in 4:11-12 flips that completely. The leaders exist to equip the people. The people are the ones who do the works of service. That means the accountant in your group is doing ministry when she gives financial counsel to a struggling family. The teacher is doing ministry in his classroom. The neighbor who shows up with food after a loss is doing the work of the Christ. This is also the natural connection to Brazos Pointe’s “deploy” language. Deployment isn’t about signing up for a church program. It’s about living your whole life as someone who has been equipped/grounded in Christ and sent by Him – **Grounded and Sent**. (title of this study)

Sticky phrase: “God didn’t design the church for you to consume; He designed it to display His glory through you.”

★7. Verse 16 says the whole body grows when “each part does its work.” Not the gifted parts. Not the visible parts. Each part. Is there a place in your life right now — your family, your neighborhood, your workplace, your small group, your finances, etc — where you’ve been holding back? What would it look like to actually show up in one of those places as someone who has been equipped and sent?

This is the application landing point for the session and it connects directly to the Going movement that begins in Session 6. The question isn’t hypothetical — it asks people to name a specific place where they’ve been holding back. Some people will name a relationship. Some will name a responsibility they’ve been avoiding. Some will name a calling they’ve been deferring because they don’t feel ready. Paul’s point in verse 16 is that **readiness isn’t the prerequisite — participation is**. The body grows when each part does its work. Not when each part feels fully prepared. This question is also a natural setup for the Do It options — let people sit with a specific answer before you move on.

Sticky phrase: “**Just show up. You don’t have to feel ready to be used by God.**”

SAY IT | Leader Teaching • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Read the following aloud or put it in your own words. Keep it brief. If you’re running short on time, skip this section and move directly to Do It.

In the original Greek, chapter 4 begins with the word “therefore”. Everything Paul says about how to live flows directly from what he’s already said about who you are. You don’t walk worthy in order to become someone. You walk worthy because of who you already are.

And the walk he describes isn’t primarily about personal spiritual achievement. It’s about the body. Humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another — these are all relational. You can’t practice them alone. And the gifts Christ gives . . . apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers . . . aren’t given so a few people can feel special. They’re given so that every person in the body gets equipped for the work they were made to do.

That’s what Brazos Pointe is trying to do. Discover, develop, deploy. Not as a program. As a way of understanding what the church is actually for. You’re sitting in the “develop” part of that right now. But develop was never the destination. The destination is a body where every part is doing its work . . . deploying it’s faith, and the whole thing is growing up into the fullness of Christ.

We've been talking tonight about what it means for each part of the body to do its work. Over the next couple of weeks, I want us to be thinking about a bigger question together: What does this specific group, our small group exist to do? What's our mission? Who are we to each other, and who are we being sent to together? We're going to land on something in Session 7 — but start noticing between now and then. *(check the Mission Statement Framework attached at the end of this document)*

DO IT | Application • ~6 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Ask everyone to pick one option and say it out loud before you close. Check in at the start of Session 5. If someone named a specific place they've been holding back during Question 7, nudge them gently toward the option that connects to that.

Choose one of the following this week:

- **Speak It.** Think of someone in your life—a coworker, a family member, or a friend—who is carrying a heavy load or whose contribution often goes unnoticed. Send them a quick text or pull them aside this week to tell them specifically what you see in them and how they build up the people around them. Don't look for a return text; just give it away.
- **Show Up Somewhere.** From Question 7 — the place where you've been holding back. Do one thing this week to show up there. Not a commitment to change everything. Just one move. A conversation. A text. Showing up when you'd normally opt out.
- **Equip Someone.** Verses 11-12 say leaders exist to equip others for works of service. Think about someone in your life who is younger in faith, newer to the church, or still searching. Do one thing this week to invest in that person. A conversation about faith. An invitation. Pointing them toward something that helped you. You don't have to be a pastor to equip someone.
- **Practice One of the Five.** Pick one of the five qualities from verses 2–3 — humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, making every effort for peace — and intentionally practice it every day this week in one specific relationship. At the end of the week, notice what it cost you and what it produced.
- **Reflect On It.** Read Ephesians 4:1-16 slowly. Write down your honest answers to these two questions: What has Christ given me to contribute? And where have I been sitting on it?

PRAY IT | Closing Prayer • ~3 minutes

LEADER NOTE: Read this prayer over your group, or use it as a closing after open prayer. If your group tends to linger in prayer requests, use this as a gentle anchor to bring the session home.

Father, thank you that you didn't save us and leave us to figure it out alone. You put us in a body. You gave each of us something to bring. And you promised that when every part does its work, the whole thing grows into something that looks more and more like Jesus. We confess that we often hold back — waiting until we feel ready, waiting to be asked, waiting for someone else to go first. Tonight we heard that the body needs what you put in us. So we ask for the courage to actually show up — in our groups, in our families, in our neighborhoods, in the places only we can reach. Equip us for the works you prepared. And may what you're building through us be far more than anything we could have built alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.