

KEY SCRIPTURE

Psalm 133 (NASB)

A Song of Ascents, of David. 1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brothers to live together in unity!

2 It is like the precious oil on the head, Running down upon the beard, As on Aaron's beard, The oil which ran down upon the edge of his robes.

3 It is like the dew of Hermon Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For the Lord commanded the blessing there—life forever.

Galatians 3:28 NLT There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

John 17:21 NLT I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

Ephesians 4:2–3 NLT Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

Romans 12:18 (NASB 2020) If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people.

START TALKING

Fall has arrived, the trees are showing colors. What are some of your favorite fall traditions, foods, and activities?

START DISCUSSING

PSALMS OF ASCENT

Psalm 120-134 are called the Psalms of the Ascents. These Psalms would have been sung and rehearsed on the journey to Jerusalem for the major feasts—Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles.

People would travel from all over the country, a 10+ day journey, for the tribe of Dan to the local tribe of Judah. All from the same country but belonging to 12 tribes, each from a different area and different traditions. Remember, by this time, five hundred years have passed since the land was conquered under the leadership of Joshua – they are entrenched in living separately by tribe.

Tribe Identity

Asher: Fertile coastal territory Issachar: Agricultural tribe Zebulun: Maritime connections

Benjamin: located by Jerusalem; known for left-handed warriors

Judah: Jerusalem was home

Levi: Scattered in cities; no tribal territory

A CALL FOR UNITY

Imagining the scene: Identify a few different regions of our country. Now imagine them journeying together, sometimes for days and then spending the feast times crowded together in the city of Washington D.C. What would be the kind of things that would create challenges to unity. Do you think the people of Israel would have had similar challenges to be united? Why or why not?

Read the Psalm

Discuss the "good and pleasant" experience of unity among a diverse group of people. Take time to talk about times you may have experienced unity in a group of diverse people.

NEW TESTAMENT CALL TO UNITY

Discuss the significance of what we see in the following verses. What difference do each of these points make in how we live together?

Gal. 3:28 - In Christ We are All Equal — Rooted in Christ, Not Culture **John 17:21 -** It is the last thing Jesus prayed for

Eph 4:2-3 - It is the first thing Paul covers after doctrine in many of his letters

Rom 12:18 - The personal call to sacrifice for unity