

Small Group Guide: “EKKLESIA: Building Community”

Opening Question: If you could design the perfect sandwich, what would you put in it and why?

Opening Prayer: *Dear Lord, we thank You for gathering us today to discuss and learn from Pastor Dan's message on building community. Open our hearts to Your guidance and help us apply these teachings in our daily lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

Key Takeaways:

1. God created us for community, but we often prioritize achievements over connections.
2. Selfishness and resentment are major deterrents to forming healthy relationships.
3. Forgiveness is essential to building and maintaining strong relationships, as it mirrors God's forgiveness of us.
4. Living a life of selflessness, inspired by Jesus' example, enriches our relationships and spiritual growth.

Discussion Questions:

1. **Read Acts 2:42-47.** This passage reveals the early church's devotion to fellowship. What are some practical ways we can embody this kind of devotion in our Community Groups today?
2. **Read Romans 12:5.** What does it mean to you that we “belong to all the others” in the body of Christ?
3. **Read Philippians 2:4.** Pastor Dan mentioned selfishness as a relationship destroyer. How have you seen selfishness impact relationships in your life or in the lives of others?
4. Pastor Dan said, “God places us in families, community groups, and groups to teach us how to live selflessly.” How has being part of a group or community challenged you to be less selfish?
5. **Read James 4:1-2.** How do your desires sometimes lead to quarrels in your relationships, and how can you address this?
6. **Read Proverbs 28:25.** This verse says that a greedy man stirs up dissension. How can focusing on the needs of others help to cultivate peace rather than dissension?
7. How does holding onto resentment affect a person's ability to think clearly and make good decisions?
8. **Read Colossians 3:13.** What does it mean to “forgive as the Lord forgave you?” Why is this challenging? What steps can you take to forgive someone who has wronged you?

Practical Applications:

1. Selflessness Challenge: This week, choose one relationship and intentionally look for ways to put the other person's needs before your own.
2. Forgiveness Inventory: Take some time to reflect on any resentment you're holding onto. Write down the situation, how it made you feel, and pray for God's help in forgiving as He has forgiven you.
3. Grace and Truth Balance: In your interactions this week, pay attention to how you balance grace and truth. Are you stronger in one area than the other? How can you improve the balance?
4. Community Connection: If you're not already part of a smaller community within the church, consider joining a Community Group (laurelridgechurch.org/groups) or serving team (laurelridgechurch.org/volunteer) to foster deeper connections.

Closing Prayer: *Dear Lord, thank You for this time of fellowship and learning. Help us to carry these lessons into our lives, fostering strong, selfless relationships that reflect Your love. Strengthen us to be forgivers as You have forgiven us. In Jesus' name, Amen.*