



Discipleship Course

Belonging to a new family

Love your neighbour as yourself- session 2

Intro: What is church?

1. The promise of a new family

→ Closer than your nuclear family! (Mark 3:31-35, p. 1005)

→ Larger than your nuclear family! (Mark 10:29-31, p. 1014)

4 different ideas about what 'church' is

My view of 'church'	What that results in...
A <u>building</u> I visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I care more about the aesthetics of the meeting place than the people there.
A <u>meeting</u> I attend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I see 'church' as happening from 11:00-12:15am or 6:30-7:45pm... ● It's something I passively 'sit through'. No need to be 'involved' either on Sunday, or any other time. ● It doesn't matter if I don't interact with anyone. I might arrive late and leave straight away.
A <u>duty</u> I perform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I go to church because 'it's what good Christians do' ● I'll be dutiful, but not joyful in my attendance ● I'll miss church whenever it's really inconvenient ● Church is about me and God, not really other people
A <u>family</u> I belong to	<p>I see church as being about people. So...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I arrive in good time, and stick around after the service to chat ● I make the most of midweek groups at church, and any other opportunity to deepen relationships. ● I pursue relationships <i>outside</i> of structured church activities. ● Meeting on Sundays is a top priority because I'm committed to my family and love them. ● Church is no longer about my convenience, or how I'm feeling, or meeting my needs. It's about being there for my family.

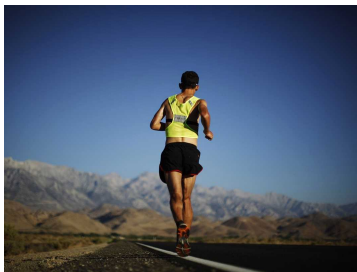
2. A picture of our new family (Acts 2:42-47, p. 1094)

- Learning God's ways together
- Remembering Christ's death together
- Praying to our Father together
- Sharing our lives together

"I'll be there for you (When the rain starts to pour), I'll be there for you (Like I've been there before), I'll be there for you ('Cause you're there for me too)"

The Rembrandts

3. The purpose of our new family (Heb. 10:23-25, p. 1208)



Or...



- Make meeting together a priority (v25)
- When you meet, make spurring each other on a priority! (v24)

Small Groups: Ephesians 4:1-16

Paul is writing to a church family in modern day Turkey, from prison. He wants them (and us!) to understand what their life together as a family should look like. In short, they are to be a **united** family, and a **maturing** family.

1. When you think of 'unity' and 'maturity', what springs to mind?
2. Paul's big desire for us in these verse summed up in v3. What does the word 'keep' imply? (v3)
3. We don't need to *create* unity- how has that already happened? (v4-6)

In God's eyes all true Christians are already united! But we are to make every effort to maintain that visibly.

4. What do the words '*make every effort*' imply? (v3)
5. What concrete and practical steps can we take to *make every effort*?
6. In pairs, or as a group, trace out the logic of v7-13

1. _____ has given gifts to _____ (v7-8)
2. These gifts include _____ (v11)
3. The purpose of these people is _____ (v12a)
4. When God's people get on with these _____ (v12b-13)

7. What does it mean to 'become mature'? (v13)
8. What do the people in v11 all have in common?
9. What is the purpose of their teaching?

Reflect: What 'works of service' might you be able to throw yourself into with church family?

10. If Christians, *fail* to grow in maturity, what danger is laid out in v14?
11. What alternative to being 'tossed around' does Paul spell out in v15?
12. What opportunities might we have to lovingly speak God's truth into each others' lives?

Reflect: Jot down a couple of ways that Ephesians 4:1-16 will change your attitude to church family

One to one in the week

- Talk through the 'reflect' questions from last week together, and share your own thoughts on these with each other
- Read through **Mark 10:28-31**, and work through these questions
 - *Jesus expects following Jesus to be costly. Are there any ways it feels costly for you?*
 - *When Jesus speaks of receiving 'homes, brothers, sisters, mothers children and fields' in this present age, he's looking ahead to the church family. What has been your experience of this?*
 - *Are there ways you'd like it to be more your experience?*
 - *Are there ways in which you can provide these things for others?*
- Share a prayer request, and pray for each other.

Next week: John 13:1-17

On Friday morning Jesus will be hung on the cross. The night before, he shares a final meal with his disciples, and graphically shows them what that death is going to be all about.

- 1. Before we get into the events themselves, what information does John want us to know? How will it help us to understand the rest of the events? (v1)**

Foot-washing in Jesus' culture was very normal (it was a dry and dusty land), but also a job reserved for the lowest slaves.

- 2. Given what Jesus says in v3, what is surprising about what he goes on to do?**
- 3. Why do you think Peter responds as he does? (v6, 8)**

If this footwashing had no more significance than Jesus just 'doing a dirty job', Peter's reply might be understandable. But Jesus' response to Peter in v7 shows that this footwashing points forward to a much greater act of sacrificial love- his death on the cross

- 4. Why is Jesus' washing his disciples feet such a good picture of what he is going to do on the cross?**
- 5. Why does Jesus issue such a strong warning to Peter? (v8)**
- 6. At the start John told us that Jesus was going to demonstrate 'the full extent' of his love. How have we seen him doing that?**

Reflect: How can you let what Jesus has done for you really sink in?

7. What lesson does Jesus want us to learn from his own actions? (v12-17)
8. What warning and what promise does Jesus give in v17? How can we heed the warning?
9. When do we find it hardest to put Jesus' words into practice?
10. How will remembering Jesus' example help us...
 - When we find it hard to get on with someone at church?
 - When we see a job that needs doing and think 'someone else will probably do it'
 - When putting others' needs above your own is sacrificial and costly?
11. If you have time, read John 13:34-35. How can we know what 'loving each other' should look like? What impact will this kind of sacrificial love have?

Reflect: Be honest with yourself- do most of your decisions in life revolve around your own needs, or the needs of others?

Recommended books for this term

<i>Relationships- a mess worth making</i>	Timothy S. Lane & Paul David Tripp	An introduction to what the Bible teaches about our relationships in life
<i>The Living Church</i>	John Stott	A wonderful introduction to God's vision for his church
<i>Friendship</i>	Vaughan Roberts	How we can be grow in our friendships as Christians
<i>Serving without sinking</i>	John Hindley	A great book thinking through our motivations and priorities in serving others
<i>Married for God</i>	Christopher Ash	How to live out God's purposes in marriage
<i>The single issue</i>	Al Hsu	What does the Bible say about being single?
<i>Counterfeit Gods</i>	Tim Keller	How money, love and power can become 'gods' in our lives
<i>Gospel Centred Work</i>	Tim Chester	A book introducing God's plan for work and how we fit in with it
<i>Honest Evangelism</i>	Rico Tice	A short book helping us to see why telling others about Jesus is hard, but still worth doing!

Prayer Points