

Normal

AUTHENTIC LOVE

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE WEEK FOUR: “NEED IS NORMAL” | 1 COR. 12:12-28

SERIES OVERVIEW

Christians sometimes give an impression that they are not to be bothered, even amongst fellow Christians, by things that seem to mess up their put together worlds. However, God’s people have been changed by his Spirit and what was once abnormal—loving sacrificially—is now normal. It is a love that acts, sacrifices and desires the highest good for others. It is the mark of which Jesus said others would know we are his followers. This love is the authenticating mark of a Christian. This love is normal.

THIS WEEK

Biblical community is designed for interdependence, not individualism. It is designed to reflect unity. This passage will allow us to talk about being a unit. We are a part. We all have a part, and we all need the other parts. In the Christian life, “need” is normal.

ICE BREAKER

Describe a time in your life when you needed someone else. If you’re a Christian, describe a time when you needed the body of Christ.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-28

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Last week, we talked about the idea that *togetherness* is normal. Paul wrote to the church in Rome, made up of Jews and Gentiles, to instruct them that they now serve a new Lord, the risen Christ Jesus. Because of this new life believers have in Christ, we are to be a people who cross cultural boundaries, racial boundaries, age boundaries, and anything else that would cause fighting amongst ourselves. Going off the idea of *togetherness*, this week, we will be discussing the idea that *need* is normal in the Christian community.

An excerpt from English poet, John Donne:

*No man is an island,
Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of a continent,
A part of the main.*

The Lord rested on the seventh day. Being God, He did not need to, but He cared for enough for us to model rest and give it to us as a gift. In the same way, Jesus did not need the disciples to do the work of the Father, but modeled what would become a Christian community. We see early on in the disciples and in the church of Corinth, the Christian life is not meant to be a faith lived in solitude.

Paul is writing to the Church in Corinth to address their wayward behavior of division in the church as well as mass immoral behavior in the church. Paul spends the chapters 1-11, or 68% of the book of 1 Corinthians, addressing the immorality in the church. The church had need to repent, but Paul did not just write to chastise them, but encourage them also in learning their spiritual gifts and submitting to the Holy Spirit for sanctification in order to become more like Christ. Last week, we looked at different types of spiritual gifts given by God through the empowering of the Holy Spirit for those that believe in Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders, encourage your group members to spend time considering and answering the following questions before coming to the group, as this will produce a more lively discussion time.)

- 1. Read vv. 12-13 again, why should these verses challenge us to pray for other members in our congregation, our city, or our brothers and sisters across the world?**
- 2. Take time right now to pray for one member of our local church, one member of another church in our city and one member of the global Church.**
- 3. Read vv. 14-21 again, what part of the “body” are you and what parts of the body do you need?**
- 4. How have you seen other members of our local church exhibit gifts that you need?**
- 5. Read vv. 22-26 again. How do these verses oppose pride, individualism, independence and hard work?**

APPLICATION

- **Believe the gospel:** The beauty of the gospel is that we don't have to have it all together. In fact, we'll never have it all together. We need Jesus' help, and we need his body to help us walk in Christ's likeness. Remind yourself of your weaknesses this week and praise God that Jesus bore all your sin.
- **Be authentic:** More “masks” are often worn in a church than at a Halloween party or superhero convention. We try to be superheroes and hide our needs and weaknesses. Identify one person in your group that you will be completely honest with this week.
- **Join a local church:** If you attend The Chapel, are you a member? If not, sign-up for the next *First Step* class coming up November 15th at www.thechapelbr.com/membership.