



THE CAMPUS CHURCH
LOVE AND SERVE GOD AND PEOPLE

Small Group Discussion Resource

One: A fellowship of “differents”

Ephesians 4:1-16

As usual, begin your meeting with prayer, asking for the enlightenment from the Holy Spirit as you discuss the word of God together.

1. Read and react to this parable:

The Animal School: A Fable by George Reavis

Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of a “new world” so they organized a school. They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming and flying. To make it easier to administer the curriculum, all the animals took all the subjects. The **duck** was excellent in swimming. In fact, better than his instructor. But he made only passing grades in flying and was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming in order to practice running. This was kept up until his webbed feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But average was acceptable in school so nobody worried about that, except the duck. The **rabbit** started at the top of the class in running but had a nervous breakdown because of so much makeup work in swimming. The **squirrel** was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of the treetop down. He also developed a “Charlie horse” from overexertion and got a C in climbing and D in running. The **eagle** was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class, he beat all the others to the top of the tree but insisted on using his own way to get there. At the end of the year, an **abnormal eel** that could swim exceedingly well and also run, climb and fly a little had the highest average and was valedictorian. The prairie dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their children to a badger and later joined the groundhogs and gophers to start a successful private school.

(Note: This story was written when Reavis was the Assistant Superintendent of the Cincinnati Public Schools in the 1940s! This content is now in the public domain)

2. Now, read and react to our passage from Ephesians 4. What stands out to you? What are the key words you see?

⁴ As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸ This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” ⁹ (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? ¹⁰ He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

3. Respond to these comments: *As we come to Ephesians chapter four, we come to a transition point. For chapter 1-3, Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, deals with doctrine. He basically is saying – here is who God is and what he has done for us in Christ. And we have had about 6 messages discovering these deep spiritual truths. But now Paul transitions and deals with the application of this doctrine for the next 3 chapters. Paul moves from the indicative to the imperative. He moves from stating facts to giving instruction. There are many implications of this pattern, but one is that “the doing comes out of the being”. What we do for Christ is to be a reflection of what he has done for us. When we focus on doing without the being, it quickly leads to burnout or worse, human pride.*

4. Interestingly, the first application of our identity in Christ is a call for unity amidst our diversity. Why did God have Paul start with this application and not something else?

5. Paul speaks about the importance of maintaining the unity of the body of Christ (4:1-6)

Look again at verses, 4-6 and see the challenge to one-ness in the church. How does that impact you?

One body	One Lord	One God
One Spirit	One faith	One Father
One hope	One baptism	One over all

Some feel that this section might have been like a hymn or worship song promoting the work of the trinity. It could look this way. What do you think about this? Is it a bit of a stretch or is there some correlation?

God the Holy Spirit	God the Son	God the Father
One body	One Lord	One God
One Spirit	One faith	One Father
One hope	One baptism	One over all

As the trinity enjoys oneness amidst diversity, so we in the church, the body of Christ, are to enjoy oneness amidst diversity. There are God's relational values.

6. What does this phrase mean: *God does not call us to uniformity but unity. We don't seek unity for the sake of unity. We seek unity because our God calls us to be reconciled to him and to others. We seek unity because unity is part of the trinity's relational values.*

7. Review the 5 essentials for unity. Define and describe each one. Then explain why it is a crucial component of unity. What is the opposite of each of these qualities? Of all of these, which ones do you find the easiest and what do you find the most difficult?

- Humility
- Gentleness
- Patience
- Bearing with
- Love

8. God has Paul reinforce how we are to celebrate the diversity in the body of Christ (4:7-15) What does this phrase mean? *But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.*
9. Slowly read through 1 Corinthians 12 and then Romans 12. As you do, and as a gift is mentioned, yell out someone's name you think has that gift.
10. Review this chart and share what you know about these gifts. Can you name people in our church with some of these gifts?

Speaking Gifts	Serving Gifts	Sign Gifts
Apostleship	Helps	Tongues
Prophecy	Giving	Interpretation
Evangelism	Leadership	Healing
Shepherding/Pastor	Mercy	Miracles
Teaching	Faith	
Exhortation	Discernment	
Knowledge	Hospitality	
Wisdom		

11. The word equip is an interesting one. It has three usages in scripture. One means to set a broken bone. If a bone is broken, say your arm, it needs to be straightened, perhaps casted, and then nurtured back to health, so that limb can be useful again. That is one usage of this word. The other Biblical usage of this word is "to mend a net". It is a fishing term. Think of a net for fishing and how easy it would be for tears to happen. And if there are big holes in the net, then it won't catch any fish. To equip the net means to sew up some of the holes to make the net productive again. The third Biblical usage of this word is "restoring". It is used in Galatians 6:1 this way of restoring someone back to faith who went astray.
Give examples of how you have seen this kind of equipping with Christians you know of. Has anyone "equipped" you for ministry? Have you equipped someone else for ministry?

12. Reflect on this story:

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would

do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

13. Review verses 12-15

...so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

List all of the outcomes of serving one another in the body of Christ.

14. God then has Paul reinforce the need to embrace interdependency in the body of Christ 4:16. Look again at verse 16. Reflect on and describe each term in this verse.

¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

15. Share examples of how you have seen the body of Christ functioning well.

16. Go around the room and describe to one another what you feel your contribution to the Campus church is. Give each other some feedback and encouragement.

17. As you close, pray that the Lord would raise up workers for the Campus and also for his broader Kingdom.