

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- You can watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

Welcome: *Icebreaker – If you had one night to do whatever you wanted with your friends, what would you do?*

Study Context:



What's Going on This Week

This week, Miguel Ramirez, Director of Español and Community Life Ministries, brought us into the fourteenth week of our series titled *A Church that Pleases God*. Miguel directed our attention to *John 17:20-23* as our church talk about how we are called to **grow** in our relationship with Jesus Christ by engaging in community. Miguel points out that in what is known as Jesus' High Priestly prayer, Jesus prays for our unity because God the Son exists in community with God the Father and they both exist in community with God the Spirit. Since we are created in God's image, it makes sense then that we too are built to experience community. As you engage in this study guide, pay careful attention to how the unity of your group can contribute to the overall mission of transforming the East Bay with the Gospel.

“Community for God is essential; it is a necessity for human beings. Yet we refuse to be part of the larger Christian Community...There is only one self-sufficient being in the world and he decided to surround himself with 12 disciples, even though he knew one of them would betray him and all of them would scatter when he was handed over to be crucified on the cross.” – Miguel Ramirez



GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)

Worship (10 – 15 minutes)

Take time with your group and prepare your hearts as you enter the presence of God for this meeting.

Option 1: Worship Music Have someone share their favorite song. You can find it online, play it, and even sing along with your group! Have them explain why the lyrics have impacted them!	Option 2: Small Group Discipleship One way you can highlight spiritual growth in your group is to identify how you have seen each group member grow from the beginning of your relationships within the group!	Option 3: Self-Reflection Philippians 2:1-11 Spend some time reflecting on whether you engage with your Life Group in the same way that Jesus modeled. Identify areas of repentance and share with the group!
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Word #1: Sharpen Your Commitment to Community (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: John 17:20-23 – In this passage, we learn that in the eyes of Jesus, community is essential and is a necessity for human beings knowing that Jesus himself is eternally in community with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. We discover that unity in the church is what (a) brings others to the feet of Jesus, (b) is where the power of God is put on display, and (c) is where believers mature in their faith as they practice the “one anothers” commanded in the scriptures. **What stands out to you the most about the passage? Then engage in the following series of questions...**(a) In what ways have you seen (or do you wish to see) the people around you brought to the feet of Jesus simply by observing the unity of your church community? (b) In what ways have you seen (or do you wish to see) the power of God put on display in your Life Group, a certain ministry event, or through Sunday Service? (c) In what ways have you witnessed (or wish to see) the believers around you growing in maturity as they engage in the one anothers of the faith?

Host Tip: Allow the group to marvel at the fact that God is inherently a community within Himself. Then, start to emphasize the power of God made manifest in the church community! This is a great time to take stock of where your group stands in terms of how the community is functioning. Does your church community feel like a **welcoming environment**? If the group is short on **(a)** then focus on improving **witness**, if the group is short on **(b)** focus more on improving **worship**, and if your group is short on **(c)** then focus on deepening in the **word**.

Word #2: Become “Disciples-Who-Make-Disciples” (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Matthew 18:18-20; John 13:34-35, 15:12-17; Accts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Ephesians 4:1-3; Philippians 2:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 – Listed are examples of how the scriptures emphasize community and loving one another. In each of these passages, the examples of community have to do with how we relate with one another as well as how we sacrifice to participate in life together as a community. **As you think about the strengths and shortcomings of your own church community or Life Group, how might God be challenging you to deepen your level of engagement and participation? What role or need might there be in your life group that you can step into and use your unique gifts to deepen our ability to love one another?**

Host Tip: Let’s continue to remember that each of our members have an important part to play in sharing in the body of Christ. What better way to begin exploring spiritual gifts and participation by delegating responsibility among the group!



Witness (20 – 25 minutes)

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would sharpen your commitment to your church community!
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would show you how you can become a more effective disciple-maker!
- Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group.
- **Pray for the entire group and how they may be able to participate in future group meetings.**
- **Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!**
- **Pray for God's hand in the multiplication and revival of your group!**

Stay up to date with our Prayer Ministry by signing up to be an intercessor online at [3Crosses.org/pray!](https://3crosses.org/pray/)

Throughout the Week

- **Prepare for Next Week:** *Suffering - Primary Text: 1 Peter 4:1-12* — A major secret to Christian growth and mission is found in suffering. We all know it, but we tend to run from it. What would it look like to build a Biblical theology of suffering and embrace it?
- **Follow up between group members:** Have each member of the group pick one other group member to follow up with about how they are growing in their faith as they learn to keep in step with wherever the Holy Spirit is leading them.
- **Join relief efforts locally and around the world:** Looking to contribute to what is going on both locally and around the world? Visit our website and volunteer in our [neighborhood resource center](#) or help sponsor an [indigenous missionary](#)!
- **Life Groups 2022:** For more information about joining a group, hosting a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org or Carmela at carmela@3crosses.org