

## The Good News

**Every person is a sinner.** Romans 3:23 says that “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” No one can live up to the standard of holiness which God has set.

**The penalty of sin is death.** According to Romans 6:23b, “The wages of sin is death.” We have earned a wage for our sin and the wage is death — eternal separation from God in a place of torment, pain, darkness and absolute isolation. It is what we deserve for our rebellion against God. That is the bad news. But there is good news.

**Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin.** Romans 5:8 says, “God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” Jesus was our substitute. He died in our place. He died instead of us because He took our cancer of sin upon Himself and paid the penalty. Even though Christ died for everyone, God will not save everyone. There is a catch.

**You must each trust Christ.** In Ephesians 2:8, 9 God says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” Trusting Christ is a matter of making a decision to rest in Him to take care of your sin problem. It is a decision which says, “Father in heaven, I am trusting the work of Jesus Christ on the cross to take away my sins. I realize that I cannot work my way to heaven and that only Jesus Christ and His death on the cross are able to take me to heaven with You. Thank You. Amen”

**COMMUNITY**

**CELEBRATE**  
**LEARN**  
**LOVE**  
**SERVE**  
**ACCEPT**

Cypress Bible Church  
Service Times  
8:15 9:30 11:00  
11711 Cypress N. Houston Rd.  
Cypress, Texas 77429  
281-469-6063  
[www.cypressbible.org](http://www.cypressbible.org)

**NOTES**

# COMMUNITY!

## Five Areas for Mutual Growth

August 28-September 25, 2011

“I have come to believe that the root of all our personal and emotional difficulties is a lack of togetherness, a failure to connect that keeps us from receiving life and that keeps the life in us from spilling over onto others. I therefore believe that the surest route to overcoming problems and becoming the people we were meant to be is reconnecting with God and with our community. But reconnecting, at its most healing levels, is no simple matter.

In our fast paced, get it done culture, it is rare.”

Dr. Larry Crabb

*Connecting*

“...let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

Hebrews 10:24, 25

Christian community, done well, brings us to levels of joy, maturity, influence and courage that we could never have alone.

This study guide will be used for the entire Community Series.

Please bring it with you each week:

**8/28:** Helping Each Other Celebrate!

**9/4:** Helping Each Other Learn!

**9/11:** Helping Each Other Love!

**9/18:** Helping Each Other Serve!

**9/25:** Helping Each Other Accept!

**Listen!** Night after night—for two weeks—I watched different groups celebrate in a café on the Tibetan Plateau. Not one of those nights was there just one person at the party.

**Tension!** We cannot celebrate if we get disconnected from our God, from our blessings or from each other. And we are commanded to celebrate!

“Rejoice in the Lord always! And again I will say, rejoice!”  
Philippians 4:4

**The Anatomy of Celebrating Together—Nehemiah 8:1-12:**

**Understanding the Word:**

**Worshiping the Lord, the Great God:**

**Eating and drinking and celebrating together:**

**Sharing with those who do not have what they need:**

**Reconnecting with the fact that the joy of the Lord is your strength:**

**Core Truth:** Given our amazing God...we must help each other refocus on Him and on His goodness to us—and therefore to celebrate.

**Live Differently:** Tonight at 6 PM is the Taste of Community Dinner to investigate small groups at CBC.

**Live Differently:** With God’s help I will

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**Core Truth:** A hallmark of a healthy community is people appreciating the difference that others bring to a unified community. (Please read Ephesians 4:1-6 each day.)

**Today:** How are the members of the Trinity the same? How are they different?

**Monday:** How are male and female different? How are male and female the same?

**Tuesday:** How does God’s creation of male and female reflect the unity of God?

**Wednesday:** How does God’s creation of male and female reflect the diversity of God?

**Thursday:** What characteristics do we need to appreciate the differences in people?

**Friday:** Why do we tend to shy away from people who are different than we are?

**Saturday:** What are some lessons you have learned from people who are different than you?

**Journal**—take some time to write your reflections from Ephesians 4:1-6.

**Listen!** Our nature is to draw towards others who are just like us. We think this is the best place for us. God calls us to a paradox of unity and diversity. But what does that look like? Why is it important to our growth to be with people different than we are?

**Tension!** The challenge in the church is for both unity and diversity to be partners on the journey of expressing the very nature of God to the world in which we live.

**The Journey to a unified diversity- Ephesians 4:1-6**

**God created diversity**

**Man is drawn to uniformity**

**The Church is called to unified diversity**

**The Benefits of a unified and diverse community**

**Core Truth: A hallmark of a healthy community is people appreciating the differences that others bring to a unified community.**

**Live Differently:** Take an inventory of the people you spend most of your time with. How many are people just like you? How many are people different than you are, that challenge the way you think and live?

**Live Differently:** Choose to be with people who are different than you are. What can you learn from them? What can they learn from you? Notice how you must put on humility to really hear the people who are different than you are?

**Core Truth:** Given our amazing God...we must help each other refocus on Him and on His goodness to us—and therefore to celebrate. (Please read Nehemiah 8:1-12 each day.)

**Today:** How does truly understanding the Word help with celebration?

**Monday:** What is the connection between authentic celebration and worship?

**Tuesday:** What are you doing to “eat, drink, and celebrate” with other believers?

**Wednesday:** How does sharing with the needy help with celebration? Will you?

**Thursday:** What does it mean that “the joy of the Lord is your strength?”

**Friday:** How do we help each other get the joy of the Lord as our strength?

**Saturday:** If you are disconnected from other believers what will you do?

**Journal**—Take some time to write your reflections Nehemiah 8.

**Listen!** No one ever “arrives” in the Christian faith. We have more to learn intellectually and we have more to learn spiritually.

**Tension!** Too many of us think we have arrived. Too many of us refuse to take input from others. Too many of us confuse knowledge with spiritual growth. Too many of us are not connected with a small group of trusted people.

**The Anatomy of Learning Together—Acts 2:41-47:**

**Devoted to the Apostles teaching:**

**Continuing in large group gathering:**

**Continuing in small group gathering:**

**The Anatomy of Learning Together—1 Thessalonians 5:12-14:**

**Giving instruction:**

**Admonish the unruly:**

**Encourage the fainthearted:**

**Help the weak:**

**Be patient with everyone:**

**Core Truth:** We have a great need for maturity and freedom...so we must help each other learn.

**Our Application:** Will you get connected with a small group of trusted believers and nurture those relationships?

**Our Application:** With God’s help I will

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**Core Truth:** Since we are servants and people have great needs... we must stimulate each other to serve.

**Today:** Please reflect on how you are doing when it comes to being a servant.

**Monday:** Are there people in your life who need motivation to love others?

**Tuesday:** Are there people in your life who need motivation to serve others?

**Wednesday:** What are the things that God has made you incredibly good at?

**Thursday:** What do you need to do in order to use the things you are good at?

**Friday:** Are there people in your life who need motivation to use their gifts?

**Saturday:** Beyond the Walls! Join us in service to our community!

**Journal—**take some time to write your reflections on the people who have served you. Additionally write about how you would like to imitate them in service.

**Listen!** The identity struggle: ...clown? ...diva? ...jock? ...brainiac? ...actor? ...wild thing? ...musician? ...FFA? ...chameleon?

**Tension!** Believers have a foundational identity which American culture is combating.

- Our thinking and behavior must be controlled by the fact that we are **servants**.
- If you don't live in your identity you are both miserable and wasting your life.
- We need to help each other with this!

**The Anatomy of Serving Together from Hebrews 10:24, 25:**

- Stimulate:
- Stimulate to love:
- Stimulate to good deeds:

**App:** Beyond the Walls next Saturday with others!

**The Anatomy of Serving Together from 1 Peter 4:7-11:**

- Fervent in love for each other:
- Special gift:
- Special gift, given by grace, therefore stewardship responsibility:

**App:** Motivate each other to use the things God made us each good at.

**Core Truth:** Since we are servants and people have great needs... we must stimulate each other to serve.

**Core Truth:** We have a great need for maturity and freedom...so we must help each other learn. (Please read Acts 2:41-47 and 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14 every day this week.)

**Today:** What would you need to do to be “devoted” to the Word? Will you?

**Monday:** What would you need to do to be “devoted” to large group gathering?

**Tuesday:** What would you need to do to be “devoted” to small group gathering?

**Wednesday:** Who needs teaching from you? From whom do you need teaching?

**Thursday:** Is there someone who needs admonition from you?

**Friday:** Is there someone who needs encouragement from you?

**Saturday:** Is there someone who needs greater patience from you?

**Journal**—take some time to write your reflections on Acts 2:41-47.

**Listen!** “I love mankind. Its people I can’t stand.” Charlie Brown.

**Tension!** Some people are unlovable all the time and all people are unlovable some of the time. (With apologies to my hero Abraham Lincoln.)

Why is loving others so hard? Why is loving other so important? How is it done?

**The Anatomy of Loving Together—John 13:31-35:**

**Jesus is setting up a very important, parting command:**

**Jesus gives a “new” command to love each other:**

**Jesus’ command is that we love one another:**

**We are to love each other just exactly the way that Jesus loved us:**

- o **Intentional:**
- o **Incessant:**
- o **Sacrificial:**
- o **Taking action:**

**Focused on our wellbeing:**

**The outcome of this kind of love is that people know we are Jesus’ disciples:**

- o Don’t leave people wondering about your faith and integrity!

**Core Truth:** When we intentionally love with incessant, sacrificial action for the wellbeing of others...people will know that we are Jesus’ followers.

**Our Application:** What would you be willing to do in order to be much more loving in the context of the CBC family?

**Your Application:** What would you be willing to do in order to be much more loving in the context of your own family?

**Core Truth:** When we intentionally love with incessant, sacrificial action for the wellbeing of others...people will know that we are Jesus’ followers. Please read John 13:31-35 every day.

**Today:** What should you do to be more intentional in loving others?

**Monday:** What should you do to be more incessant in loving others?

**Tuesday:** What should you do to be more sacrificial in loving others?

**Wednesday:** What should you do to be more concrete in loving others?

**Thursday:** How do you decide what “wellbeing” is for someone? How do you know what God wants for them as opposed to what you or others want for them?

**Friday:** Ask God for His clarity about one person who needs love from you now.

**Saturday:** Make an intentional plan to love that person well from here on out.

**Journal**—take some time to write your reflections on John 13:31-35.