

REDEMPITIVE FAMILY

Small Group Study 1 - Being Family

THE BIG IDEA: Being family is meant to be the everyday reality of every local church. Given our diversity, being authentic family is supernatural. It is a powerful witness to ourselves and to outsiders. The family says to those who already belong 'your contribution is vital and we will share your load'; the promise to those looking in is that they can have their deep desire for both purpose and authentic community met here.

OPEN

1. What is your happiest childhood memory of being family together? How did this experience make you feel?
2. Have you ever been uncomfortable around someone because of their appearance or background yet later became friends? Tell of your experience.

DIG

Read Romans 12 : 3-16

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

⁹Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹²Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. (NIV)

3. How does 'belonging **to** each other' (v. 5) run counter to our cultural conditioning?

4. The passage mentions several ways we live out belonging to each other and supporting each other. How many can you find?

5. In this passage Paul moves back and forth between talking about our conduct inside the family and our conduct outside it. How does consistently practising being authentic family together train us for mission?

6. Imagine yourself an outsider looking in on a family living by these values. What would you be thinking and feeling?

REFLECT

7. What is our biggest challenge to putting this passage into practice for ourselves?

8. What is one thing this group can do to enrich our experience of family together?