



OPENING QUESTIONS

What has been your greatest experience of community? Where have you best experienced **knowing** and **being known**?

CONTEXT

Ephesians 2:11-22 is part of a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to a small group of Christ-followers in the city of Ephesus, located in modern-day Turkey. As part of the Roman Empire, Ephesus had a 1,000-year history and was well known for its magnificent Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Three things stand out about this body of believers to whom Paul is writing. One, they were relatively new to following Christ. At best, they'd been following Jesus for nine years. Two, they were part of a Roman culture that placed great emphasis on power, status, image and wealth. Citizenship, family name, occupation, age and gender meant everything to your being assigned status or no status. There was a world with clearly defined insiders and outsiders. Third, this is a group of people who, having experienced salvation, have stepped into a faith that has Jewish roots. But they're not Jews; they're Gentiles – people from the other nations of the world. And historically, the Jews consider themselves to be God's people. To summarize: These are new believers who have rejected the norms of the culture around them and have embraced faith in a world that considers them to be outsiders.

BIG IDEA

We were created for community.

READ TOGETHER

Read **Ephesians 2:11-22**. Go around your circle and have each group member read a verse beginning with verse 11. Please read slowly and taste these words as you read. Take special note of what Paul says to these outsiders.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Revisit verses 11 and 12. In what ways does Paul describe his readers as outsiders?
- 2) What divided the Gentiles from the Jews?
- 3) Look at verses 13-17. What changes have taken place in the lives of these outsiders as a result of salvation? What are the two reconciliations Paul writes about?
- 4) How does Paul say that these changes took place?
- 5) Read verses 18-22. What word pictures does Paul use to describe what the Ephesians have become?
- 6) How do these word pictures emphasize the unity Christians have with one another?
- 7) At the heart of this passage is what God did for us in sending His Son to die on the cross. Think about your salvation. What benefits are you reminded of from your life as you read this passage?
- 8) What do these verses teach us about the Church and the kind of community we are to be?

CHALLENGE

Take some quiet time as a group to personally answer this question: **What practical first step toward unity with another Christian can you take in the next week?** Then share with the group what you've written down and one specific way in which you are committing to putting this into practice over the next week. Remember to review this next week as a group to share how God has used this in your life.

PRAYER

One of the key ingredients for a healthy body of believers is unity. Would you take some time to pray for unity among our RockPointe community? Pray for unity in our leadership, our small groups, when our sites gather for worship and in our mission to help people find and fully follow Jesus. Pray that we would not be a church where people are turned away from Christ by Christians who don't get along with each other.

NEXT STEPS

Life Together is a book written by the German author **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** while he was teaching in an underground seminary during World War II. Writing in an era when global life was marked by a distinct lack of unity, Bonhoeffer writes to emphasize loving one another and living in harmony. This small book is a classic that reminds us that community is not something to be taken for granted and the Church needs to function as a community of love. He identifies the gap that exists between what the Church should look like according to the book of Acts and what the Church often, actually, looks like. A worthy read on this topic of being created for community. (128 pages)