

Small Group Study Guide

“The Spirit and Peace” | Joyfully Spirit-Filled Series |
From Sunday October 13, 2019

Appetizer:

Question: Community is a popular word these days. And yet, it seems like so few people are experiencing it the way they want to. Why do you think community is so difficult to achieve?

Get someone to read Ephesians 2:11-22 out loud to the group. Then choose another individual to read the passage through a second time, to allow the words to sink in.

Ask the group: Why do you think Paul takes so much time to talk about how the Gentiles and the Jews are now one humanity? What do you think was going on in his time that calls this into question? Is there still a Gentile vs. Jewish tension today? Why?

Main Course:

Two big statements came out of the passage when talking about the Spirit-filled life. One, that we have a shared identity and two, that our shared identity is a peaceful one. Let’s reflect on those two statements.

Question: Over the years a lot of emphasis has been placed on individual spirituality, making the Christian life about your personal relationship with Jesus. Of course, this is a wonderful thing, that we can each have a unique relationship with God. But has this emphasis been a detriment to community? If so, how?

If there was to be a renewed emphasis on a community approach to our relationship with God, what might that look like? And how would we need to change in order to accommodate that approach?

Question: The passage of Scripture that we are studying talked about how the cross was paramount in bringing people close to God, but also bringing people close to each other. How do you feel the cross does this? How does Paul explain this in the passage? (Hint: has there been a change in how our individual histories are now viewed?)

Question: Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do.” Theologian Gordon Fee suggests that the good works we do are the works of reconciliation. He states that “We walk as those who are God’s masterpiece of reconciliation.”

Question: How does being identified as “God’s masterpiece of reconciliation” influence you? What does this look like on a daily basis in a community of peace?

Dessert:

The sermon defined the Spirit-filled life as being the family of God for the sake of the world. The Bible states that Christians will be known for how they love each other. (John 13:35)

Reflection: Being part of the family of God does not always feel like a Spirit-filled experience! We don’t always get along, people are very different from one another, and we often have different views of what it means to be a Christian. And yet, the very act of being in Christian community is part of being Spirit-filled. The presence of the Holy Spirit in our church shows the world that God really did reconcile himself with his creation and wants to know us more. This is an awesome truth and awesome responsibility!

Share: Share with each other experiences that you have had where community has surrounded you as the Family of God for the sake of the world.

Reflection: Peace, according to the Scripture passage, includes being part of the family of God and being temples of the Holy Spirit. It means then to participate in the life of the church, in the worship of God, and in participating in His mission. How can you specifically contribute to the peace of your congregation?

Get someone to look up the Apostle’s Creed. This statement has been spoken for centuries by Christians around the world, regardless of denomination. Although it is a statement of faith, it is also a statement that is declared in community. If you feel comfortable, have someone read it out loud, or print out a copy for every person in the group and read it together in closing.