Week 1 Small Group: Plugged into Community

**Opening Prayer:**

God of all nations, we invite you into this place. Jesus we light this candle as a sign of your presence. Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten us. We pray that we keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and that we may grow in our understanding of your ways. Amen.

“We have all known the long loneliness, and we have found that the answer is community.” Dorothy Day

**Breaking the Ice:**

- What are your first thoughts when someone says church?

- What has your experience been of the church?

**Wrestling with the Word:**

Read Ephesians 2:19-22

- Paul uses a few different ways to describe the church, which resonates most with you?

- How might you describe God’s love for the church? Why does church matter?

- Has it ever cost you something to be a part of the church?

- Look up the word cornerstone, how does this apply in the scripture? What are the implications to the church today?

**Next Steps:**

- What are some walls that need to be broken down in our lives so that we can be the church God calls us to be?

- What are the obstacles to community in the church?

- Where are you being called to join in Christ’s building of a holy temple?

**Prayer for the Week:**

Jesus our cornerstone, we recognize that we need you to build the church. We want to put you first, to let your ways be the guiding force in our lives. We humbly set ourselves before you. Send your Holy Spirit to guide us. Amen.

Week 2 Small Group: Plugged into Jesus

**Opening Prayer:**

God of all nations, we invite you into this place. Jesus we light this candle as a sign of your presence. Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten us. We pray that we keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and that we may grow in our understanding of your ways. Amen.

“Prayer is the most concrete way to make our home in God.” Henri Nouwen

**Breaking the Ice:**

- In what setting do you feel closest to God?

- What are some recollections of prayer, either of your prayer life or someone you admired for their prayerful nature?

**Wrestling with the Word:**

Read Ephesians 3:14-21

- What are the characteristics of someone in whom Christ dwells?

- What does it mean to be ‘rooted and established in love’?

- Paul is praying for the believers in Ephesus, what in this prayer do you need the most?

**Next Steps:**

- What gets in the way when you are listening for God?

- How would you like to grow in the way that you pray for your church?

- The goal of Paul’s prayer is the glory of God. Think about your own prayers. What can you do to focus more on God’s glory?

**Prayer for the Week:**

Using Paul’s prayer as a model write down ways that you can intercede for people in your life this week.

God of love, help us to be rooted and established in you. Give us a love that surpasses knowledge, compassion that points to you and endurance in the face of adversity. Help us to be the church that is known for its love for all people. Amen.

Week 3 Small Group: Plugged in for Others

**Opening Prayer:**

God of all nations, we invite you into this place. Jesus we light this candle as a sign of your presence.

Spirit of wisdom and understanding, enlighten us. We pray that we keep our hearts and minds open to new ideas and that we may grow in our understanding of your ways. Amen.

“According to the Talmud, every blade of grass has its own angel bending over it, whispering, “Grow, grow.” Barbara Brown Taylor

**Breaking the Ice:**

- Share a time when you didn’t have the right skills or tools you needed to get something done and you relied on the gifts of someone else.

**Wrestling with the Word:**

Read Ephesians 4:11-16

- Tell us about someone who has made a significant impact upon your life. What was their gift?

- The scripture says each of us has been gifted. Have you ever doubted your gifts or questioned if you really had any gifts from God at all?

- Paul places a high value on community, why?

- Are there areas in your life (work, school, home, church) where you could be using your gifts more?

**Next Steps:**

- How does this passage invite us to think differently about Christian growth?

- What steps are you taking to mature in your faith?

**Prayer for the Week:**

Paul invites us to know and experience Christ more deeply through significant involvement in the lives of other believers.

Jesus, help us to live our lives for you. Give us a knowing of how you have prepared us to serve and a desire to use our gifts for the building of your kingdom. Redirect our steps when necessary. Grow us in our trust and reliance on you. Keep us grounded in your love. Amen.