

**Life Group Topic:#30**  
**Cultivating Communities that Make Jesus Known in the World**  
**John 17:20-24**

**WELCOME:** (15 minutes)

If you could live this past summer over again, what is one thing you might do differently?

**WORSHIP:** (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

**WORD APPLICATION:** (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following summary before moving to the questions:

**1. Jesus' Prayer for a Global Community to call His own (vs. 20)**

When death is imminent for someone that we love, we are especially alert to their final words. God in his goodness, allows us to quietly listen in to one of the last conversations Jesus would ever have with his Father before his death. Hours before his arrest and execution, Jesus opens up his heart to his Father and he lets us listen in.

Jesus had been praying for the small band of disciples that had followed him faithfully until now... but then he continues:

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message...that all of them may be one..*

Jesus knows he is about to die, and soon return to his Father in heaven. He also knows that his small band of disciples, filled with the Spirit will soon be contagiously telling others about Jesus wherever they go. And so now Jesus begins to pray for all those who would believe in Him. In short, here we see Jesus praying for us. And we know from Hebrews 7:25 that Jesus continues, as the ever living High Priest, to pray to His Father for us. We know that the Holy Spirit is also continually interceding for us, even today.

The Spirit and the Son are holding us up with constant prayer to the Father. This is the way the Trinity expresses their love for us today. And not only does Jesus pray for us, but He is praying for all those who will yet believe in our message

**2. A Community of One Heart and Mind: (vs. 21a)**

But what is it that Jesus prays for: *...that all of them may be one Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.*

The passion of Jesus prayer is that we would be one! That we would become an authentic community, bound together by our love! But what does it mean to live together in unity? Jesus said, let them be one, just as you are in me, and I in you (John 17:21) He is not calling us to uniformity, since he and the Father were distinct from each other, and had entirely different roles. Yet they shared a common heart for the world. For the Father this meant the agony of giving up his son. For the Son it meant being stripped of all he had to be tortured as a criminal. They were so united in purpose, that they each made the unique sacrifice their love demanded.

And so it was that Jesus' prayer is answered. Within months of Jesus prayer we read of the early church in Jerusalem: *All the believers were one in heart and in mind (Acts 4:32). No one claimed any of his possessions as her own, but shared them with those in need. They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to prayer, and to fellowship. They met constantly together in the temple courts and in their homes (Acts 2:42-47).*

The world today tries its best to duplicate authentic Christian community. Modern neighbourhoods sometimes create a façade of unity and harmony, by eliminating everything strange, and accentuating sameness. Tragic events of human life are glossed over, ignored, or explained away. But communities shaped by faith in Jesus Christ, present a different image. They create gracious and caring space where broken people can come, and where those without Christ are always welcome.

### 3. A Missional Community: (vs.21b – 23)

And why is Jesus so concerned that we be a community of one heart and soul-intimately connected with the community of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and intimately connected to each other? **(Read 21-23).** Think about this for a moment- He says...*so that the world may believe that you sent me... to let the world know that you love them...*

We are called together as the people of God, **not for our own sakes at all**, but for the sake of the world; for the sake of all those **who Jesus is still praying for.**

Jesus calls and forms us into a community, but then he sends the community into the world for the sake of others.

**When we truly are a people who love the Lord with all our hearts and love each other deeply, we will be a showcase to the world of what Jesus desires for all His creation. (Acts 2:47)**

**But how will the world see and believe and be drawn into the community of faith?** Few people from the world will venture into this church building on a Sunday morning. More people may however come into our homes, and with close to 40 Life Groups meeting in neighbourhoods all over the city, this is clearly one of the best ways for the world to see our life together in Christ. And beyond this, Life Groups

can become penetrating missional communities that enter into the lives of broken people to demonstrate the love of Christ.

#### **4. An Eschatological Community (vs 24)**

One thing Jesus is passionate about is that we might someday see his glory. He can't wait to throw back the curtain of heaven so that all creation might see the glorious splendor of the Father and the Son. As he prays here he knows that his human body is about to be torn & mutilated & crucified. **And so he asks the Father to raise him from the dead and restore to him the radiant majesty that defined who he was before the creation of the world.** Three days later the Father did exactly that- he exalted him to the highest place and we know that one day we will see him in his glory.

Let me tell you, there is nothing that will compare to that day. All of creation yearns for that day.

That is why, above all else that we are called to be a missional community. That is why we send out mission teams. That is why we meet throughout the city in Life Groups: so that the world would be drawn to Jesus. Then one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:10-11).

#### **Word Application Questions:**

**These questions are designed to get the group talking about life application:**

- 1. Do you recall some "final words" shared with you or your family by someone you loved shortly before the end of their life on earth?**
- 2. How was Jesus one with his father? How is that an example of the unity he desires for us, His church?**
- 3. Why is Jesus convinced that our unity as a Christian community will cause the world to believe in Him?**
- 4. In an increasingly secular Canada, where few unbelievers will attend "church services" how will the world see our common life in Christ?**
- 5. How has God uniquely crafted our Life Group to have impact on others without Christ?**
- 6. What difference does it make for us today, knowing that one day we will see Jesus in his radiant glory?**

#### **WITNESS: (15 minutes)**

**This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolding those we reach into the Life Group.**