



Ephesians – What kind of person are you becoming?

Date: Sunday 18th March 2018

Speakers: Jess Munson, Andy Smith

Key Verses: Ephesians 4: 1 - 16

Summary

- **(v1-6) United through God's Family** - Though the church is made up of different people from different backgrounds, we are united as one through God. Paul tells us that our calling is to contend for unity in the church, which looks like patience, gentleness, humility and bearing with one another in love. Unity means love in action - bearing the weight of life for one another, and not only with the people we naturally click with. We are called to bear the weight of life through loving those around us who we don't understand, who think and live life differently than us.
- **(v7-13) Diverse by God's grace** - Unity does not mean uniformity. Jesus has given each of us spiritual gifts which we are meant to actively use in community to equip and encourage the church. John Wimber, the 'father' of the Vineyard movement, called this "Everyone Gets to Play". As a church we want to help you discover the gifts he has given you, the way he has made you, and help you to find ways to use those gifts in encouraging others. It can be hard to both give and receive from community when we are in a hard season and when it's hard, we need to ask the Holy Spirit for his guidance and strength to invest in community.
- **(v14-16) Spiritual maturity in community** - Paul doesn't promise that it will be easy, but he does say that the goal, our purpose, is to reach maturity. As the church community works towards unity through actively engaging in our diverse gifts, a rootedness in Christ happens. Without a united community to be a part of, people are more easily misled - as Paul says, getting blown around by different opinions and by culture. We are to "speak the truth in love" and as we do this, we grow and support one another just like a body does with all of its parts working together.

Questions for Small Groups

- God's plan has always been to create a united family of believers made up of different types of people, from different cultures and different backgrounds. What do you find challenging about this? What do you find encouraging about this?
- Have you experienced someone "bearing with you in love" through a difficult time in life? How did it feel to receive that support?
- How might we as a small group practice unity and bearing with one another in love?
- Paul lists several spiritual gifts Jesus gives people in the church. Are any of these new to you, or you are unsure what they mean? Let's look them up as a group.
- In what ways has Jesus gifted you with? How might you be able to use those gifts to support and encourage this group? Are there any other ways you might be able to use these gifts to encourage the wider church community?
- Paul talks about spiritual maturity as a community, that it means we won't be "blown around" by cultural opinions or false teaching. Have you experienced this feeling of being "blown around" by culture or popular opinion?
- How might we as a small group/church encourage each other in God's truth, and by speaking the truth in love (even when it's awkward!)