

SERMON SERIES: We Are Family
SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 5:21-32
SPEAKER: Mike Woodruff
DATE: April 22-23, 2017

Small Group Discussion Guide

for leaders (see below for participants' guide)

Gathering Time

- Make sure newcomers are welcomed and engaged in conversation
- Offer a snack and drink if the setting is right (i.e. a home)
- Arrange seating so everyone in the group can see each other

Getting Acquainted

- **What is one takeaway from your last small group meeting? How are you doing putting it into practice in your life?**
 - As routine opener to group meetings, this question encourages individuals to apply your discussions in their lives. It also brings continuity & intentionality from meeting to meeting.
- **What are the most important relationships in your life?**
 - This question sets the stage for the Bible Exploration and helps people get to know one another on a personal level.

Bible Exploration

- **Read Ephesians 5:21-32 as a group and reflect on the Scripture's teaching about marriage. What statements stand out and why? What is your reaction to the roles and responsibilities outlined for men and women? Discuss.**
- **What are some things you have done that have led to healthy relationships, in marriage or in general?**
- **What difficulties have you experienced in relationships?**
- **In his sermon, Mike sets up the need to look to God for guidance by making several points about relationships. What thoughts or ideas does this list spark for you?**
 - We were made for relationships.
 - Sin makes relationships difficult.
 - Our relationships shape us spiritually.
 - Relationships between men and women are uniquely complicated.
 - There is a lot of confusion about marriage.
 - Marriage today suffers from impossible expectations.

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- God's ideas are counter-intuitive, but they work.
- **How does the Bible's teaching in Ephesians 5:21-32 address the current challenges you face in your relationships?**
- **What is one takeaway from this week's discussion you can begin applying to your life this week? Be specific, and be prepared to share next time how it went.**

Prayer

- Invite the group to participate in a time of "conversational" prayer. Each person may pray as often as he or she wants, but only 1-2 short sentences on one topic at a time. This lowers the barrier of participation for people unaccustomed to praying with others.

Wrap-Up

- Be sure to end the formal conversation on time.
- Thank newcomers for joining you, and invite everyone to the next meeting.
- Encourage people to linger for a few minutes, and do your best to have a personal interaction with each individual before he or she leaves.

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Prayer