

SERMON SERIES: We Are Family
SCRIPTURE: John 15:12-15
SPEAKER: Mike Woodruff
DATE: May 13-14, 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.
- **Today we're talking about friendships. What is the craziest thing you've ever done with a friend?**
 - This question sets the stage for the Bible Exploration and helps people get to know one another on a personal level.

Bible Exploration

- **Read John 15:12-15 as a group and reflect on it as teaching on friendship. What statements stand out and why? Discuss.**
- **What does it mean to lay down your life for your friends? Give practical examples.**
- **How is Jesus the perfect friend?**
- **Mike opened his sermon by pointing out two reasons to stop and think about friendship. Do you agree with his assessment? Why or why not?**
 - Most people are not aware of how much we need friends.
 - Most people don't realize how important friends are to help us end well.
- **Mike then talked about different life stages and encouraged us to do three things. Which of these stands out as a priority for you? Explain.**
 - Take a friend inventory. Are you well set up for the next decade? Are you investing in friends? Are you a good friend?

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- Consider ways you may be stuck. Many people get stuck along the way and stop growing. Have you stopped growing? If so, what can you do to get unstuck?
- Take advantage of the stage you're in. There are upsides to every stage. Look for them and appreciate them.
- **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