



TOGETHER: LIFE IN THE FAMILY

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

This study guide is meant to help you learn and apply the truths of Scripture to your life right now, both individually and with your community group. To get the most from these guides, work through it on your own before gathering with your community group. If you aren't in a community group, consider attending the next Starting Point at Mercy Church, where you can take the next steps to connect with a community group in your area. RSVP at mercycharlotte.com/connect.

PART I: THE JESUS FAMILY

INTRODUCTION

LEADER NOTES: *Welcome your members to the group. Use the discussion questions to help your group members observe, interpret, and apply the Scriptures to life.*

THE BIG IDEA: *The family of Christ exceeds all other forms of family.*

The word family conjures up many different feelings. Depending on your background, family can either be a great source of joy or a seemingly irreconcilable source of pain. For some us, family reminds us of love, laughter, and great meals. For others, family causes hurt, struggle, and disappointment. Regardless of our experience with family, Christ gives us an open invitation into *His* family.

As we begin the study we will see that Christ calls us to a greater family. The family He discusses is rooted in Him. The primary identity of the family of Christ is Christ Himself. That means that no matter what your picture of family is, Christ has already done everything necessary for you to be a welcome member of his family. There is a connection in the family of Christ that exceeds all other forms of family, even biological.

Two places in Scripture that give us a glimpse of biblical family are Mark 3:31-35 and Hebrews 10:19-24. As we focus on these passages, we will see that Christ redefines family to include all those who follow Him faithfully. Mark 3:31-35 shows us an



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interaction where Christ, in the midst of his disciples, considers his own mother and brothers.

Christ draws a line in the sand for who is and who isn't his family. His teaching is a fundamental shift from the typical strong "family first" culture of his time. Christ re-orders family lines by identifying his followers, not his blood relatives, as his family.

Hebrews 10:19-24 helps us see more about the practical workings of biblical family and community. As believers, we are called to the same unity that Christ exhibits in Mark 3. The people of God are set apart from the world around them.

Hebrews 10 continues to explain that in order to accomplish the purpose we have been given, we must be actively involved in one another's lives. The passage leads us to see more about the revolutionary idea that we are called to something greater as the family of God. We are a people called by God to boldly proclaim His gospel. In our study, we will see that the essence of biblical family is common confession of Christ and constant encouragement toward Him.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION

In the message we received a beautiful picture of the community of God. These questions are a reference point to help your community group discussion.

LEADER NOTES: *These questions are here to help your group get their minds re-engaged with the passage and teaching points from the weekend message. Think of this as "priming the pump" for a more interactive discussion in your time together.*

1. What are your takeaways from this weekend's message?
2. In what ways does your current community resemble the type of "family" talked about this weekend?



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INVESTIGATING SCRIPTURE: Mark 3:31-35 & Hebrews 10:19-25

The following questions are designed to help you gain understanding of what the Bible teaches.

LEADER NOTES: *The following questions will help you work through the passage(s). Have someone read the passage(s) aloud, dividing among two or three people if needed.*

The reading of the word, as a group, is an act of worship that helps the group focus on the importance of Scripture. Make a point to emphasize this as an important part of worship together. After the scripture is read, pray to continue to set the tone of worship. Praise God for the gospel and the finished work of Christ, and the transformation he gives through Christ.

1. Mark 3:31-35 shows us the type of interaction that Jesus had with his disciples and his own family. What is so different about Christ's response to his family?
2. How does Jesus' response show us about the type of relationship we should have with one another in Christ?
 - a. How does the teaching in Mark 3:31-35 change your perspective on "family?"
 - Jesus spent time with people to develop real relationships.
 - At this point, Christ is with his disciples living in the type of community he is teaching us about.
3. What are some of the common objections to biblical community?
 - Commitment
 - Time
 - Why does it matter?
 - Letting others in is really hard



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4. There is a great deal of rich language in Hebrews 10:19-22. How does the author explain the gospel?
5. Hebrews 10:19-24 gives us additional insight into the beauty of the Family of God. What connections does the author make between the gospel and our interactions in the family of God?
 - First, we have a new way of living because of what happened through Christ (20)
 - United in our confession of Christ
 - Loving one another
 - Encouraging to one another
 - Meeting together
6. Why is it so important that we are unified as the body of Christ?
 - We are called to be unified in the message of Christ
 - As Hebrews 10:25 says we are called to steadfast hope in the message of the Gospel
7. We heard about the importance of next steps this weekend. What is a next step for you?
 - Joining a community group?
 - Joining the church?
 - Serving?
 - Ministering in the community?

TAKEAWAYS

These questions are intention to help you apply the truths about biblical family to your own walk with the Lord.

1. Are these types of biblical relationships present in my life?
2. Is the church really my family or something that I only do once a week?



MERCY CHURCH

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PRAYER

Prayer is an essential component of your life as a follower of Christ, and an integral part of any healthy church body. Divide up into groups of 2-3 people and use the following points to guide you through a time of prayer together.

LEADER NOTES: *The following is designed simply as an outline for you to use in your group prayer time. Feel free to make this your own and adjust it to fit your group.*

- Thank God for giving us community here in Charlotte.
- Pray for a greater strengthening of our church family.
- Pray that Mercy Church would be a place where people from all walks of life experience the family of Christ.