

Community Study

Session 6 Questions

Ice-breaker: Where did you tend to get picked when you played kickball, softball, dodgeball, etc. in recess when growing up? Any funny stories?

1. Think back to a time when you were excluded by someone (or a group of people). It may have been recently or a long time ago. Describe that situation, nothing why you were left out:

What did you feel like when this happened?

How did it impact you (short-term/long-term)?

From your experience, how important is a feeling of belonging?

2. In your family growing up, were certain kinds of people “on the outside”—on an unwritten list of those who don’t have as much value as the rest of us?

Why do you think people get put on such a list?

How do you still struggle with an internal list of people who are “less than”?

3. Read Ephesians 2.1-5,12-13, and 19. Contrast all of what *was* true about you with what is *now* true because of Christ.

God could have left you on the outside—there is no logical or compelling reason he had to offer you new life or a place of belonging in his family. However, he didn't leave you adrift. Paul stresses that God chose to include you, to reach out to make a place for you in his kingdom. According to these verses, what was your worthiness for such acceptance?

What, according to Paul, motivated God to want to include all of us? (Eph. 2.4-7)

4. What would be true for you today if God had not been an inclusive God—how would your life be different?

5. Every day, we have the choice to be exclusive and not care about those outside the faith, or to be inclusive and work to invite others into relationships with God. For Paul, he couldn't help but devote his whole life to reaching out—as he himself had been reached out (Eph. 3.7-9). Which of the following tend to keep you from being more passionately inclusive? Explain each one you identify with:

Low passion in my own walk with God

Feel comfortable

Fear of jeopardizing the good fellowship I've found by allowing others in

Our church is already so big—who needs even more people?

Certain kinds of people make me uncomfortable

6. Paul wanted the churches he led to be free from any kind exclusivity. What are common categories that separate people?

7. Consider your own struggles with various forms of exclusivity.

Rate yourself on the following scale. Why did you put yourself where you did?

1- Really struggling to be around those who are different. -- Open to including others -- 10-Actively working for a more just , inclusive church (and society)

What would help you to take the next step?