

## Session 4: Mutuality

### INTRODUCTION

#### Recap

Last session, we explored how God's kingdom welcomes Jew and Gentile alike. As flourishing communities, we practice radical inclusion, intentionally welcoming all.

**Share:** Were you able to implement any changes? If so, what impact did it have?

#### Vision + Objective

In flourishing communities, everyone practices self-giving, so joys and pains are shared. Mutuality leads to unity.

#### Opening Discussion

Discuss examples of mutuality. Where have you seen both joy and pain shared in a relationship or community? Consider personal examples, movies, or books.

Pray to transition.

### PASSAGE STUDY

#### Background<sup>1</sup>

- **Corinth:** A prosperous port city that was culturally diverse with huge disparities between the wealthy and the poor.
- Paul's letter to the church addresses status and class issues. The gifts and skills valued in the church were based on what culture valued. Unity through mutuality and interdependence would be their witness.

#### Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-28

#### Observation:

- What stands out about the metaphor Paul uses for the church? What is repeated?
- What should be uniting the community?

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<sup>1</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 459-461, 485-486.

**Interpretation:**

- Why might this call to unity be challenging for the Corinthian church? What barriers might this community have to address or overcome?
- What is at stake? Why is this message of unity important for the church?

**Application:**

- What can it teach us about the relationship between diversity and unity?
- What challenges or inspires you from today's discussion?

**RESPONSE****Activity**

Community Assessment<sup>2</sup>: Honestly examining disparities within a community is necessary for true mutuality. Consider the questions below from various angles like gender, generation, personality, marital status, race/ethnicity, etc.

- Who are perceived to be "insiders" vs. "outsiders" of the community? Why?
- Who has decision-making power? How are decision-makers chosen?
- Who shares life together?
- Are you intimate enough to tell each other hard truths?
- What gifts or skills tend to be honored or celebrated in your community? Which go unnoticed or seem to be less valued?

**Discuss:** What barriers or opportunities exist for your community to truly practice mutuality? What would have to continue or change to truly share one another's joys and pains?

**Action Step**

- Discuss ways that your community can practice sharing life and including people who might feel excluded. (ideas: lunch, childcare, intercessory prayer, carpooling, disaster relief, etc.).

**Prayer**

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<sup>2</sup> Questions adapted from Alexia Salvatierra's "Courageous Assessment Metrics of Power Dynamics."