



DISCUSSION GUIDE
Week 2
January 7th & 8th, 2012

Ice Breaker:

Share one thing you did with family or friends over the holiday season that strengthened your relationships. Which do you think strengthens your relationships most: fun activities or deep conversation?

Opening Prayer:

Father God, thank you for inviting us into a relationship with you and for helping us to build strong relationships with others.

For Discussion:

Read Ephesians 5:25-32

This passage is often looked at from the perspective of the marriage relationship, but this weekend Pastor James used this passage to remind us of how much Jesus loves the church—enough to give up his own life.

- What are some other descriptions of how Christ loves the church from this passage?

This passage reminds us that Jesus sees the church as his cherished bride.

- How do you think the average American views the church? What words would they use to describe church?
- What words would you use to describe your church?

James said that the church is PEOPLE, not a PLACE and that we all need friends we can count on when difficulties come our way.

- Share an example of when you have recently received help from a friend or when you have been able to help someone else face a challenging time.

At EastLake Church, we work hard to make opportunities for people to connect. However sometimes our own hurts, fears or negative attitudes can get in the way of us building life-giving relationships. One of the first steps toward building positive relationships is to understand our relationship with God and his family.

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

This passage teaches us that God has done the work needed to reconcile our relationship with him and to invite us into his family. Knowing that we are beloved members of his family helps us to extend love to others.

- What kinds of things can hold you back from building great relationships?
- What kinds of things can bring problems and divisions into relationships?

Last weekend Pastor Ryan encouraged us to seek reconciliation in 2012.

- Is there someone God has been prompting you to reconcile with?
- What steps can you take this week to begin a process of reconciliation?

Closing Prayer:

Jesus, thank you for making us a part of your forever family! Help us to grow in our understanding of your love for us and then to extend that love to those around us.