



## Week Four

### Opening Prayer

God, thank you for making each us in your image and yet so diverse. Be with our conversation today and help us to recognize you as we sit with each other in this discussion group space.

### Talk It Over

This week we continued our series called 40 Days of Prayer. The goal of this series is to help us grow in our connection with God and to grow in our understanding of God's power through prayer. The hope is this series can help us find something fresh in our relationship and approach to God.

- What was your prayer life like this week? Remember, this isn't about right answers. Our time here is about being honest with where we are currently in hopes of growing in our faith and friendship.

### Read Galatians 3:28; Romans 15:5-7 (NIV)

Each week of this series we are looking at a prayer Saint Paul prayed for people he knew and loved. In this specific prayer, we see Paul looking to remove barriers that divided believers and to encourage believers to lean in to oneness found in Jesus.

In the context of the whole Romans letter, in light of all the neighboring verses, and the overarching message of the Bible, people who have studied the book of Romans say that Paul was praying for conscious, intentional oneness in the body of Christ. He wanted people to move in towards each other.

In fact, we can say that Biblical unity is intentional oneness drenched with beautiful diversity. Various parts coming together as one. This wasn't a oneness found in segregation or separation, but oneness in true togetherness because of Jesus.

- Re-read the last paragraph. What jumps out at you? What does this stir inside you?
- How are you doing at connecting with people who are different than you? Do you have people in your life, including other believers, who think differently than you?
- How are you doing at pursuing unity with people who are unlike you? What do you do when someone's differences are exposed to you? Do you move away or try to lean in?
- More importantly, how do you think God views our differences?

### This week we looked at four ways we can pray for unity:

1. By asking God to help you see people the way he sees people.

#### Read John 13:34-35 (NIV)

- Think of a personal issue that affects how you treat others. This could be a habit, hurt, or hang up. How are you wrestling with this before God?
- How do others in your life respond to that issue when they see it? How do you wish they would respond?

2. By asking God to help you be a conduit of peace no matter the circumstance.

**Read Romans 12:18**

- Can you think of a time when you were right but the way you delivered your truth was wrong? Share about that.
- Do you know someone who seems to help bring chaos to peace? What are some words or a phrase you would use to describe them?

3. By asking God to help you trust and surrender to His best.

**Read Philippians 4:8-9 (NIV)**

- In an effort to create unity, what would be some good guardrails to put in place for those times when you feel you're at your max?
- Tell us some of the fun things you have learned about you and your capacity? (Example: Do Not discuss serious issues when hungry)

4. Ask God to help you walk in humility.

**Read Philippians 2:1-5 (NIV)**

- How can you be humble before God and in turn be humble with others? Have you seen this humility connection in your own journey? Describe someone you saw display this well.

**A Note to the Group Leader:** Today's closing prayer comes with two steps, start with reading the prayer from Saint Francis outloud and then move into a time that allows for others to pray.

**Closing Prayer STEP One**

*Lord, make me a channel of thy peace, that where there is hatred, I may bring love; that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness; that where there is discord, I may bring harmony; that where there is error, I may bring truth; that where there is doubt, I may bring faith; that where there is despair, I may bring hope; that where there are shadows, I may bring light; that where there is sadness, I may bring joy... (St. Francis)*

**Closing Prayer STEP Two**

Tell the group you will be transitioning to a moment of silence after reading the prayer above and anyone is welcome to jump in and pray a simple prayer about the things that were discussed today when they are ready. If there is silence between prayers, that is okay. Make sure the group knows this. The process does not need to be rushed or polished. Once it seems as if those who want to pray have prayed, be prepared to close the prayer time up by praying your own prayer.

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**How To Use this Discussion Guide**

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.

*(Content continued on the next page.)*