

# The Whys And Hows Of Hope Small Groups

## *Series Overview*

Hope Community Church believes that a vital small groups ministry is of great importance in properly shepherding the people in its care. Small groups also provide a place for Hope attenders to serve and come alongside one another. In short, small groups create the greatest potential to reach the lives of individuals on a regular basis and honor God by helping as many people as possible become fully devoted followers of Christ.

What do we mean when we talk about small groups at Hope? Why do we do what we do? How is a typical small group supposed to look? What are we asking groups to focus on? This six-week series is designed to help small group participants form answers to those questions by sharing Hope's vision for small groups and, more importantly, by exploring what God's Word says about Christian community, accountability, and the Body of Christ as expressed in the local church. The ultimate goal is for small group members to think rightly about their small groups in a well-rounded manner in order to live out the Gospel through God-honoring community with one another. For some, this will mean gaining freedom from misconceptions. For others, this will be encouragement to take responsibility, make necessary changes, and follow-through.

### **Why This Series?**

- Help small group attenders gain vision and perspective about why Hope has small groups and what we hope to accomplish within those groups.
- Break down walls and misconceptions about why and how Hope does small groups.
- Begin a discussion in groups that will allow leaders to address concerns, hopes, and misconceptions about their small group.
- Cast vision regarding wholehearted participation in community that leads to application of God's Word.
- Cast vision for all Hope attenders to be the church to one another.

### **Series Breakdown**

#### **Week 1: The Foundation**

This study will lay a foundation of understanding why we gather as Christians in small groups. Just as any solid structure has a solid foundation, so too do we need to understand why we meet together in small groups as followers of Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is why we gather! Because the Gospel is the foundational reason we gather, we're going to walk through the basics of the Gospel this week.

#### **Week 2: The Body of Christ**

In this study your group will discuss the Body of Christ. Group members will read Scripture pertaining to the Body and begin to examine how this can impact their interactions with one another in small group.

**Week 3: Pillar 1 - Community**

Group members will be given a brief overview of the 3 pillars of Hope small groups. In this study your group will examine the pillar of Community with a focus on how small groups can live out the examples shown in the New Testament.

**Week 4: Pillar 2 - The Bible**

In this study your group will discuss the value of God’s Word and why we study the Bible in our small groups. Group members will also briefly discuss Hope’s Statement of Faith regarding the Bible.

**Week 5: Pillar 3 - Accountability**

In this study your group will be talking about the value of Christian accountability and why we place so much emphasis on this in our small groups. Your group will also discuss the common impediments to effective accountability.

**Week 6: The Church Being The Church**

In this study your group will continue their discussion of the activities of the church and expand group members’ understanding of their role in the church as “the church”. This week includes a teaching video: <https://youtu.be/Ev9tyUXwnHs>.

*Each study will include this progress bar to help your group members recall previous discussions as well as see where the series is leading over time.*

Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Study 5	Study 6
The Foundation	The Body Of Christ	Pillar 1: Community	Pillar 2: The Bible	Pillar 3: Accountability	The Church Being The Church

**FYIs**

- Handouts are essential to this study! Please be sure everyone is able to access them.
- The goal for each of these studies is to generate about 45 minutes of discussion (excluding Accountability Questions). Some groups may find that they are able to divide an individual study into two nights of discussion—that’s OK! Feel free to flex these as needed to suit your unique group dynamic.
- Please read through the entire six-week series of studies prior to beginning to lead. This will help you defer questions to the appropriate week as needed.

## The Foundation

### Learning Objectives

- Lay a foundation for the “whys” of Hope small groups.
- Gain an understanding and greater appreciation for the gifts Christ gave us through His death on the cross and how that overflows into good works.

### Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- Read the Series Overview before beginning this series.

Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Study 5	Study 6
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### Questions for Discussion

Pray for your time together as a group.

? Think back to a time you did something without understanding why you were doing it in the first place. How did that make you feel? How would you have handled the situation differently if you’d understood why you were doing it?

**Read Out Loud:** For the next six weeks we’ll be working our way through a study about the Whys and Hows of Hope Community Church small groups. We’ll start at the foundation and add a new layer each week.

This is where we’re headed:

1. Foundation
2. Body of Christ
3. Community
4. Bible Study
5. Accountability
6. The Church Being the Church

Before we dive into the “hows” of small groups at Hope Community Church, it’s important to take a step back and look at why we even go through the trouble of gathering together. Just as any strong structure has a solid foundation, so too do we need to understand why we meet together in small groups as followers of Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is why we gather! We’re going to walk through the basics of the Gospel this week.

### Read Out Loud: Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup> All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

**Read Out Loud:** For the purposes of this study, we will divide this passage into three parts and then see how they fit together to form one whole picture.

### Verses 1-3 - Hopeless And Helpless

**Read Out Loud:** Let’s take a look at verses 1-3 more closely.

? Verse 1 describes us as “dead in our transgressions.”

What does that mean? When are the Ephesians dead in their transgressions?

*Possible Answers: Spiritually dead. We enter into the world spiritually dead at birth. We have no inclination toward God. We have no innate ability to please God. The Ephesians were dead in their transgressions before they found salvation in Christ.*

To be spiritually dead is not to be almost dead or at wit’s end. It is to be truly lost and completely separated from God. Helpless and hopeless. Prior to Christ, dead people stayed dead.

**Read Out Loud:** Verses 2 and 3 describe what a life apart from Christ looks like.

? Looking at the text (and the text box) above, which of these descriptions stands out to you? How did you see this play out in your own life prior to knowing Christ?

*Possible Answers: Like a lot of Americans today, their lives are all about self-gratification. The pursuit of personal happiness is primary. The tricky part about this way of living is people don’t even realize they are “dead in their transgressions.” Thinking I knew what would bring fulfillment and happiness. Played out in the college/party scene, search for wealth, etc.*

? In verse 3 Paul writes, “Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.” When you hear human beings described as “deserving of wrath,” how does that make you feel? Why? How does our culture react to hearing human beings are “deserving of wrath”?

*Possible Answers: Because we were living apart from Christ and have fallen short of His perfect standard in every way, we are deserving of His wrath, His judgment upon us. It makes me more aware of how lost I am in my own sin. It makes me uncomfortable, because I’ve been told since I was little that I was a “princess.”*

#### “By Nature”

Based on the original language, this has to do with our status at birth. Just as we are unable to choose whether we are born into a wealthy family or an impoverished family, so too we are without choice with regards to our spiritual condition at birth. We are all born into sin. In essence, our spiritual lineage or our parent/owner at birth is sin. God hates sin and separates Himself from it. Therefore, we are deserving of God’s wrath.

This can be a hard truth. Oftentimes we compare God’s anger (wrath) with our own, which is most often blind and short-sighted. God’s anger is different. His is all-knowing, justified, and a true reflection of His hatred of sin.

Thankfully, God didn’t leave us this way.

#### Verses 4-7—Together With Christ

**Read Out Loud:** <sup>4</sup> But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

? Optional: In the original language, the Greek prefix before each of the main verbs in this passage means “together with” Christ. This means that what is true of Christ has also become true for followers of Christ. This passage highlights 3 things God did in us “together with” Christ. List those things.

1.           

2.           

3.           

*Possible Answers:*

1. *Made us Alive*
2. *Raised us Up*
3. *Seated us with Christ*

? Contrasting with verses 1-3, verses 4-7 talk about us being made alive, raised up, and seated with Christ. What is the meaning and significance of those terms? How can each of the above phrases impact the way we view ourselves today?

*Possible Answer: We are no longer spiritually dead or without hope. Where sin was our “parent” we are now born into a new family with Christ. God is now our parent and spiritual lineage. Raised up from our spiritual death now, but also raised up as Christ was at the last resurrection. We now have hope!*

? Looking at verses 6 and 7, what can we understand about God’s motivation for all He did for us together in Christ?

*Possible Answer: God wants us to be living, walking expressions of His grace! We get to show God off to the world.*

### Verses 8-10—Created For Good Works

**Read Out Loud:** <sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— <sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

? Optional: How would you explain verses 8 and 9 to a friend with words less commonly used by Christians? (Specifically avoid the following words: grace, saved, and faith.)

*Possible Answers: We were lost, and God came to find us. We didn’t find God, He found us even though we really didn’t deserve to be found because we had done so many things to hurt God. Because of that, we can’t brag that we found God. Now that we are in a relationship with God, we should live out all the good things God asked us to do during our time on Earth. We get God’s love with no strings attached.*

? Verses 8 and 9 make it clear that we cannot earn salvation or God’s favor. Looking at verse 10, how are we, as followers of Christ, to view good works?

*Possible Answers: Although they can’t earn us salvation they are important! We were created to do them. God’s prepared us for the works He has planned for us.*

? How does understanding that Christ has joined us with Him, through His grace not our effort, motivate us to gather in small groups as followers of Christ?

*Possible Answers: Because Christ gave us a free gift, we can be motivated to share the free gift of ourselves and our gifts with others in our small group. People in our group don’t need to earn our love or acceptance. If we model Christ’s love, we can come to community more wholeheartedly.*

? How does this understanding of good works line up with the way you thought of good works in childhood? How can that previous understanding spillover over into our thinking about our good works in Christ as followers of Him today?

*Possible Answers: I always felt like I needed to do good things to earn God's favor. I thought that if I tried to do good things I would fall into legalism, so I just do what I want and depend on God to forgive me.*

### **Bringing It All Together**

? How can being an active and consistent member of a small group remind us of our foundation? (That we were once dead and now we are made alive, raised up, and seated with Christ?)

*Possible Answers: Regular interaction with each other will help us build and maintain the close relationships necessary to do this.*

? How can participation in a small group show God's incomparable riches and grace to non-believers around us?

*Possible Answers: Relationships can be tricky. We can be tangible examples of God's love and mercy to the watching world.*

? It's tempting to let things like small group become a Christian obligation or something we *have* to do rather than something we *get* to do. Is attending this small group stemming from a foundation in Christ or a sense of obligation? How can active and regular attendance in a small group become less of a "have to" and more of a "get to"?

### **For Discussion And Accountability**

? What changes can you make in your actions or thinking that will help Christ become or remain your central motivation for good works?

## The Body Of Christ

### Learning Objective

- Gain a greater understanding of the Body of Christ and begin to examine how this can impact interactions with others in small group.

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### Questions for Discussion

**Pray for your time together as a group.**

**Read Out Loud:** God created us to live in community with one another. We are not meant to live in isolation or only interact on Sunday mornings. This week we will look at how God designed the Body of Christ.

**?** Have you ever had a significant injury to a specific part of your body? What happened? How did that impact the overall functioning of the rest of your body?

### **Read Out Loud: Romans 12:1-8 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. <sup>3</sup> For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. <sup>4</sup> For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. <sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; <sup>7</sup> if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

**?** What does it mean to offer our bodies as living sacrifices? What are the results of doing this?

God created us and built us for a relationship with him. We belong to him, and we owe him gratitude for every breath, every moment, everything. Because humans were built to live for him (to worship), we will always try to worship something - if not God, we will choose some other object of ultimate devotion to give our lives meaning. - Tim Keller



*Possible Answers: It means we intentionally remember and live as though God is our highest priority. It is a willingness and ability to see God's ways as higher than our own. As a result we have true and proper worship. To live a life that is holy and pleasing to God. A life that would bring Him honor and glory.*

? We are constantly worshipping something. This passage highlights two possible focuses of our worship. What are they?

- 1.
- 2.

*Answers:*

1. *God*
2. *The world (or the things/patterns of this world)*

? How can being involved in a small group motivate you to worship God alone (rather than the things of this world)?

*Possible Answers: Godly calling. We should obey God. God's mercy provides us with the proper "driver" to worship. Witnessing the lives of fellow believers and how they live sacrificially for God would motivate me to pursue after the Lord. Also the opportunity to encourage one another in our walk with the Lord.*

? What does viewing ourselves with sober judgment (vs. 3) look like? Why is this so hard to do sometimes?

*Possible Answer: Being sober doesn't mean being sad or lethargic. Sober means "unimpaired." When we have sober judgment, it means we see ourselves through an unimpaired lens. It can be hard to have a sober lens on ourselves because sometimes the world tells us we are perfect and at other times the world tells us we are flawed and worthless.*

? How can being surrounded by other followers of Christ in a small group help us to have a "sober lens" through which to view ourselves?

*Possible Answer: Sometimes we can't see ourselves clearly. We ALL have blind spots. We need help!*

**Read Out Loud:** Verses 4 and 5 are important in understanding the body of Christ. Paul uses the integrated functioning of our physical body parts to highlight the importance of the integrated functioning of Christians in the body of Christ.

? What does it mean that "each member belongs to all the others?" How is this concept challenging in American culture?

*Possible Answers: Our culture values and applauds individual achievement. Since youth, we have been trained to go it alone. It's hard to imagine a world where we have responsibility for strangers or people we don't even necessarily like.*

**?** Small groups are an extension and expression of the Body of Christ. What does it mean that “each member belongs to all the others” in your small group? What does that look like in a healthy small group?

*Possible Answers: It means we have a responsibility for one another. We reach out, even when it's hard or inconvenient. We think of each other when we'd rather think of ourselves. We try to know and highlight each other's strengths. We are unique in our own talents and gifts, which allows us to serve one another well and support each other in good times and bad.*

Optional Transition: Let's take a look at another passage about the Body of Christ.

**Read Out Loud: 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11 (NIV)**

<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

**?** Verse 7 brings up two points about Spiritual gifts (manifestations of the Spirit). What are they, and why are they important?

*Possible Answer:*

- 1. EACH ONE...every follower of Christ is granted spiritual gifts. No one is giftless. Everyone has been given something to contribute.*
- 2. We are given Spiritual gifts for the common good. That is the point! We are meant to use them for the benefit of the body of Christ.*

**Read Out Loud: 1 Corinthians 12:12-21 & 25-27 (NIV)**

<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup> Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

<sup>15</sup> Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup> But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”...

<sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

<sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

**?** How is (or isn’t) our small group like a human body? How do (or could) our different parts complement each other and work together?

*Possible Answers: Naty is kind of like a mouth—she really likes to talk and makes people laugh; while Jared is more like a hand—he likes to serve others quietly. Laura is like a heart—she reminds us to have deep empathy for others.*

**?** How can our small group work more as a unified body? What are ways we are doing this well? What are ways we can improve?

Optional Transition: Let’s take a look at a passage that talks directly about the benefits of working as a healthy body.

**Read Out Loud: Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)**

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

**?** This passage addresses the results of the body of Christ using the gifts of God in a unified way. What are those results?

*Possible Answers: Speaking the truth in love. Growing to become a mature body of Christ. No longer tossed around but standing firm. Not deceived. Unified, mature in faith, etc.*

### **For Discussion And Accountability**

**?** How does your individual behavior and attitude contribute to or hinder your small group in becoming a unified body? What are ways you are doing this well? What are ways you can improve?

**If your group is interested, check out a spiritual gift assessment. There are many available online. Work through your group “results” together to continue the discussion.**

## Pillar 1: Community

### Learning Objectives

- A brief overview of the 3 pillars of Hope small groups.
- Examine in greater depth the pillar of Community with a focus on how small groups can live out the examples shown in the New Testament.

### Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- Review the handout paying particular attention to the infographic about the 3 pillars of Hope small groups.

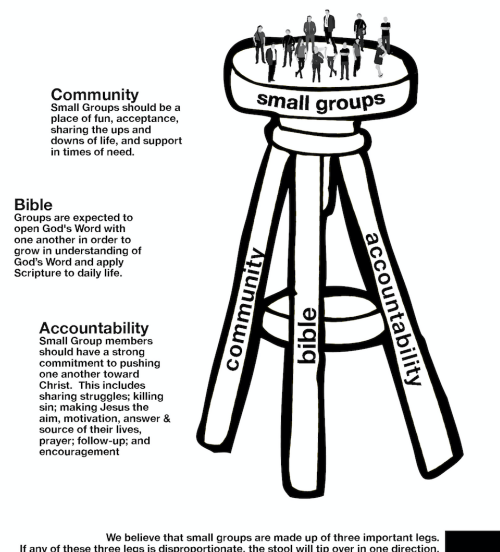
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### Questions for Discussion

Pray for your time together as a group.

#### Small Groups' Vision Statement

To foster biblical community that makes Disciples of Christ and builds up His body.



**Read Out Loud:** In our study today we will be talking about the first of three pillars of Hope Community Church Small Groups. Before we start, let's take a look at a visual depiction of those three pillars.

*As leaders, you may need to address some common Questions:*

*Q: Why are these the three pillars?*

*A: Hope staff and elders get the blessing of seeing the people of Hope from a 30,000 foot view. As we look around our community, we see the biggest need for these three elements. Although many other things may happen in small groups (e.g. service and outreach), our staff and elders ask leaders to focus on these three areas because these elements are the most difficult to find on a regular basis in a large church through Sunday morning attendance.*

*Q: Why isn't \_\_\_\_\_ one of the three pillars?*

*A: Although Hope values things such as serving our communities and outreach to the lost, Hopesters in general are pretty motivated in these areas outside of Hope's walls! We encourage groups to serve together and continue to reach out to others in need! It's OK to share and be a part of each other's lives in this way. However, leaders are asked to focus on these three pillars on a week-to-week basis, providing group members with an opportunity to come together as a community, open God's Word, and truly apply it to their lives through authentic and transparent accountability.*

? Do you have any thoughts or questions about the 3 pillars of Hope Small Groups?

### **Let's Talk About Community**

Optional Transition: As mentioned, the first pillar of a Hope Community Church Small Group is Community. Tonight we will be discussing Community in greater detail.

? What have your experiences been like in Christian community?

? Why is it often so difficult to let ourselves be truly known in Christian community?

### **Christ As The Example**

#### **Read Out Loud: Philippians 2:1-8 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!

? Looking at verses 1-4, what do they say about how we should relate to one another?

*Possible Answer: We would remember how Christ comforts us and be motivated to share that with those around us. That we would be unified, and view others with respect and compassion. We would look toward the interests of each other.*

**?** In verses 5-8 Christ modeled the behavior that Paul (the writer of Philippians) calls the Philippians to live out. How can Christ's example motivate us to live out His example amongst the people in our small group and church?

*Possible Answer: Christ humbled Himself and moved toward us by becoming fully man. It motivates me to move toward others, even when it isn't easy.*

### What Does The Bible Say About Christian Community?

*Leader's Note: Divide the passages below between small groups of people (2-3). Have the groups examine the passages (5 minutes), fill out the chart (5 minutes), and report back to the group (Approx. 1 min. per passage). This activity will take up the bulk of your remaining discussion time.*

Verse	What is the surrounding text talking about?	What does this verse have to say about Christian Community?	How is our small group living this out?	How can our small group grow in this area?
<b>Hebrews 10:24-25</b>	<i>Persevering in the faith. Holding on to the hope that we have in Christ.</i>	<i>Encouraging one another in love and good deeds. Value of meeting together to encourage one another in the faith.</i>		
<b>Romans 12:16</b>	<i>What tangible love looks like within a community.</i>	<i>Live in harmony and in peace with others. Do not be proud or conceited. Associate with those of a lower position.</i>		
<b>Romans 16:17</b>	<i>Paul's farewell to the Romans.</i>	<i>Be aware of those who could cause divisions in your community or those who may be creating barriers to keep you from pursuing Jesus.</i>		

<b>Acts 2:46-47</b>	<i>Early beginnings of the church and what it looked like.</i>	<i>Regularly attending church with one another. Worshipped God together.</i>		
<b>Colossians 3:13</b>	<i>Put to death those things of our flesh and put on our new self, which is being made alive in Christ.</i>	<i>Offer forgiveness towards one another like Christ has forgiven us.</i>		
<b>1 Peter 4:8-11</b>	<i>Live for the will of God, opposed to how the pagans live, those who pursue their human desires.</i>	<i>Love one another, be hospitable toward one another. Faithfully use the gifts God has given you to serve your community.</i>		
<b>Ephesians 4:1b-3</b>	<i>End of Ephesians 3 reminds us how we need community to remind us of God's love. Unity and maturity within the body of believers.</i>	<i>Humble, patient and gentle towards one another. Continue to strive after peace in relationships.</i>		
<b>Romans 15:5-7</b>	<i>Bear with those who are weak and strong. Look to build one another up.</i>	<i>Strive to be like-minded with one another in order to glorify God together. We should accept one another just as Christ has accepted us.</i>		
<b>1 Cor 12:26</b>	<i>Unity in the body of Christ. All members of the body are unique and equally important. They are all needed in order to make the body function to its fullest potential.</i>	<i>We are to come alongside one another in suffering and rejoicing. When one person is hurting, we all are hurting etc.</i>		



**Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)**

<sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup>not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

**Romans 12:16 (NIV)**

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

**Romans 16:17 (NIV)**

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

**Acts 2:46-47 (NIV)**

<sup>46</sup>Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

**Colossians 3:13 (NIV)**

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

**1 Peter 4:8-11 (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup>Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup>Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup>If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

**Ephesians 4:1b-3 (NIV)**

<sup>1b</sup>I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup>Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup>Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

**Romans 15:5-7 (NIV)**

<sup>5</sup>May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, <sup>6</sup>so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

### **1 Corinthians 12:26 (NIV)**

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

#### **Summarize**

- ? What are ways that our small group is doing community well?
  
- ? In what ways can we improve community in our small group?
  
- ? What obstacles stand in our way of truly knowing the other people in our small group?

#### **For Discussion And Accountability**

- ? How does your individual behavior and attitude contribute to or hinder our small group in growing in community? What are ways you are doing this well? What are ways you can improve?

## Pillar 2: The Bible

### Learning Objectives

- Gain an understanding of the value of God’s Word and why we study the Bible, particularly in our small groups.
- Briefly discuss Hope’s Statement of Faith regarding the Bible.
- Practice applying Scripture to real life situations.

### Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- Pre-read [Hope’s Statement of Faith](#) regarding the Bible. Email [smallgroups@hopecc.com](mailto:smallgroups@hopecc.com) with any questions or concerns.

Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Study 5	Study 6
The Foundation	The Body Of Christ	Pillar 1: Community	Pillar 2: The Bible	Pillar 3: Accountability	The Church Being The Church

### Let’s Talk About The Bible

Pray for your time as a group.

**Read Out Loud:** As mentioned last week, the second pillar of a Hope Small Group is the Bible. In this study we’ll be talking about the value of God’s Word, and why we study the Bible in our small groups.

**?** When you were growing up, what role did the Bible play in your life? How would you have described the Bible as a teenager?

*Possible Answers: A dusty book on the shelf at my house. A book my parents read daily, but had little impact in my life. Something very dear and impactful to me. A ridiculous book filled with religious nonsense.*

**Hope Community Church’s Statement of Faith regarding the Bible:** We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

*Leader’s Note: The phrase “original manuscripts” might be new or confusing to your group members. This phrase refers to the fact that the Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek centuries ago. Those original manuscripts (which were eventually lost to time) were then copied multiple times. Today, we translate the Bible to English from those copies of originals, yet the accuracy of our current English translation is incredibly high. Any variance in text that happened over time is marked in our English Bibles via footnotes.*

? What are your thoughts regarding Hope's understanding of the Bible? In what ways have you seen Hope talk about the Bible that's consistent with this definition?

*Possible Answers: I agree! Wow, that surprises me. I guess I've never thought of the Bible as being completely without error. How can that be if it's written by humans; how can it be perfect? How does Bible translation play into this? On Sunday mornings during sermons I see the pastors talking about the Bible in a way that shows its authority. They ask me to live a life that is in step with the teaching of the Bible.*

*Leader's Note: People may have questions, concerns, or disagreements about Hope's understanding of Scripture. As a small group leader, please don't feel like you need to have all the answers or explanations. Discussion is fine as long as it remains respectful. It's possible your group can help point people in a direction that honors both honest questions and the beliefs of Hope. If needed, please direct people to either our small groups staff ([smallgroups@hopecc.com](mailto:smallgroups@hopecc.com)) or Hope's pastoral staff ([pastors@hopecc.com](mailto:pastors@hopecc.com)).*

? Looking at the sidebar, how does this compare or contrast to other ways you've studied Scripture and used the Bible in small group settings?

*Leader's Note: Be aware of members of your group who seem to be preoccupied with growing simply in biblical knowledge. This seems to be a fairly common issue for people in Hope small groups. This likely is exacerbated by Hope's population being highly educated and very comfortable in the intellectual realm. We desire for group members to focus first on growth in Christ through application of His Word.*

Hope's desire for biblical discussion in small groups is that we would...

- Open God's Word together on a regular basis.
- Read and discuss a passage(s).
- Focus on applying that passage to our daily lives through the help of the Spirit and the encouragement of believers in our small group.

## What Does The Bible Say About The Bible?

? The Bible itself talks about the importance of studying God's Word. It might seem strange to use a source itself to give merit and validity to that same source. How is the Bible different from any other text or source in that regard?

*Possible Answer: The Bible is the inspired Word of God written by God Himself. There is no higher authority by which to judge it.*

**Read Out Loud:** Let's look at some passages from the Bible that talk about the value and use of God's Word.

### Read: Psalm 19:7-11 (NIV)

<sup>7</sup>The law of the Lord is perfect,  
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,  
making wise the simple.

<sup>8</sup>The precepts of the Lord are right,  
giving joy to the heart.  
The commands of the Lord are radiant,  
giving light to the eyes.  
<sup>9</sup>The fear of the Lord is pure,  
enduring forever.  
The decrees of the Lord are firm,  
and all of them are righteous.  
<sup>10</sup>They are more precious than gold,  
than much pure gold;  
they are sweeter than honey,  
than honey from the honeycomb.  
<sup>11</sup>By them your servant is warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.

? What does this passage say about God's Word (law, statutes, etc.)?

*Possible Answers: God's Word is far greater and more life giving than things of this world. It is pure, refreshing, and radiant. More precious and sweeter than gold and honey.*

? In what ways do you see the commands of God being precious and giving joy? When is that hard to see?

*Possible Answers: Although it can be hard and confusing, we know that true hope and joy are found in God's ways for our lives. Sometimes God's ways are very different than our culture's and that can create confusion and uncertainty.*

**Read Out Loud: Proverbs 3:1-4 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup>My son, do not forget my teaching,  
but keep my commands in your heart,  
<sup>2</sup>for they will prolong your life many years  
and bring you peace and prosperity.  
<sup>3</sup>Let love and faithfulness never leave you;  
bind them around your neck,  
write them on the tablet of your heart.  
<sup>4</sup>Then you will win favor and a good name  
in the sight of God and man.

? What does this passage say about God's Word (teaching and commands)?

*Possible Answers: Walking in the ways of the Lord will bring peace and flourishing. We are to hold God's Word close to us.*

**?** How do we store up God’s Word in our heart? How have you seen “stored up Scripture” benefit you in your life?

*Possible Answer: Read the Word regularly, memorizing Scripture, talking to friends. When I have been in tough situations I am able to draw on the wisdom of Scripture because it has been infused in my heart and mind. I can filter the world through Scripture.*

**Read Out Loud:**

**Luke 24:44-48 (NIV)**

<sup>44</sup>He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup>He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things.

**John 20:30-31 (NIV)**

<sup>30</sup>Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**?** How is God’s Word critical in showing us who Christ is?

*Possible Answers: God's Word is the revelation of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The Lord gave us His Word to grow in understanding of who He is and who Jesus is so we may believe in His name. God's Word predicted Jesus in the OT and shows how He fulfilled all of the OT in the NT. We now understand those prophecies were about Jesus. Through the scriptures, we learn about the forgiveness and life that Jesus brings.*

**Read Out Loud: 2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NIV)**

<sup>14</sup>But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup>and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

**?** List the ways described in this passage that Scripture is useful. How have you seen those things play out in your own faith life?

*Possible Answers: God's Word is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. Through God's Word we will be equipped and ready for His good works. Helpful to study in a group so we can talk about how God is teaching and shaping us through His Word.*

## Let's Practice!

*Leader's Note: Don't rush through discussion to get to this exercise.*

**Read Out Loud:** Let's practice reading and discussing a short passage from God's Word and then applying it to our lives.

### **Read Out Loud: Romans 5:1-5 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup>And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

? What stands out to you in this passage?

? How can we apply this passage to our lives this week as we go out from small group?

*Leader's Note: We want people to get at their personal application. Don't let the discussion simply be ethereal or general answers such as "If one were to suffer, they could..."*

? What will we, as a small group, do this week to encourage one another to follow through on applying this passage until we meet again?

## Summing It Up

? When we come together in close community to study God's Word our lives are made richer as well. In what ways can we, as a small group, grow in our ability to encourage one another to read and apply God's Word in our daily lives?

*Possible Answer: We could stop focusing on knowing more, and start focusing on living out what we do know from God's Word.*

## For Discussion And Accountability

? What does it look like (both joys and challenges) to study and apply God's Word in your own life?

? In what ways do you personally need to be encouraged or challenged to apply God's Word in your life?

## Pillar 3: Accountability

### Learning Objectives

- Identify and discuss the common impediments to effective accountability.
- Discuss the value of Christian accountability and why we place so much emphasis on this in our small groups.

Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Study 5	Study 6
The Foundation	The Body Of Christ	Pillar 1: Community	Pillar 2: The Bible	Pillar 3: Accountability	The Church Being The Church

### Questions for Discussion

**Pray for your time as a group.**

**Read Out Loud:** As mentioned a couple of weeks ago (refer to diagram from week 3), the third pillar of a Hope Community Church Small Group is accountability. Tonight we will be talking about the value of Christian accountability and why we place so much emphasis on this in our small groups at Hope.

? Think back to a time when you did something that was difficult. Did you have someone to encourage you to start, move forward, or finish? How does having someone to encourage you change a difficult situation?

### Let's Talk About Accountability

? When you think about accountability, what comes to mind? What have your experiences of accountability been like before joining this group?

*Possible Answers: People are encouraged to share situations from church, para-church, work, or other situations. Examples may be both encouraging and very difficult.*

? What are common factors in situations where accountability goes poorly?

*Possible Answers: No follow through, lack of caring amongst group members, harsh or hurtful responses to sin, etc.*

? What are common factors in situations where accountability goes well?

*Possible Answers: Follow-up, concern, genuine empathy, etc.*



## What Does The Bible Say About Christian Accountability?

Optional Transition: Let's take some time to look at passages from God's Word that address Christian accountability. Pay particular attention to how you can apply these passages in your small group.

### Read Out Loud: Colossians 3:5-10 (NIV)

<sup>5</sup>Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup>You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup>But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

? This passage lists the ways we used to live apart from Christ and calls us to walk differently as followers of Christ. Why is accountability so critical in living out the commands of these verses?  
*Possible Answers: The world tells us to do exactly the opposite of the things in this verse. Without God's Word and each other reminding us to live for God, it's so easy to lose focus. We can help each other remember the truth.*

? What are specific ways we as a small group can encourage each other to live like Christ and remember that in Him we have taken off our old self and have put on a new self?  
*Possible Answers: Knowing each other's struggles and reminding others of what Christ has done in our lives. We can ask each other how we are doing at this. We can remind each other of truth when we are struggling.*

### Read Out Loud: James 5:16a (NIV)

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

? How have you seen confession of sin to another trusted person lead to healing?  
*Possible Answers: Sin is finally brought into light where there can be accountability to find help and healing. We might not even be aware of how much our sin impacts us or those around us. When sin comes out into the open, others can offer helpful insight about the depth of hurt it has in our lives.*

Optional Transition: While James 5:16 talks about confessing sin, Galatians 6 talks about how we should receive others when sin is brought to light.

### Read Out Loud: Galatians 6:1-2 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. <sup>2</sup>Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

? How can we, as a small group, show mercy and help restore each other as we share our struggles?

*Possible Answers: Pointing each other toward the Gospel. Reminding others of Christ's forgiveness. Encouraging others to live out of an overflow of God's love for us.*

? How can we lean on each other to help us "watch ourselves"?

*Possible Answers: By keeping people in our lives who will offer us accountability! Being proactive to keep watch for the people in our small groups. Pray for one another. Telling each other we are praying for the group. This can start a chain reaction of prayer and encouragement. Kind of like dominos are dependent on one another to make a successful domino run.*

### Accountability In Our Small Group

? As a group, let's create a definition of *biblical accountability*.

? How can our group improve in the area of Christian biblical accountability?

### For Discussion And Accountability

**Read Out Loud:** Christian accountability involves seeking out, heeding, and offering accountability.

? Am I seeking out accountability?

? Am I heeding the wisdom of God's Word and those who offer accountability in my life?

? Am I bravely and lovingly offering accountability to others in my small group?

# The Church Being The Church

## Learning Objectives

- In this study your group will continue their discussion of the activities of the church and expand group members' understanding of their role in the church as "the Church."
- Understand that your small group is an extension of the church in which the Bible calls you to be active, reciprocal participants.

## Steps to Prepare (For Leaders)

- This week includes a teaching video: <https://youtu.be/Ev9tyUXwnHs>.

Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Study 5	Study 6
The Foundation	The Body Of Christ	Pillar 1: Community	Pillar 2: The Bible	Pillar 3: Accountability	The Church Being The Church

## Questions for Discussion

Pray for your time as a group.

? Do you enjoy gift giving? Why or why not?

**Read Out Loud:** This week we'll be talking about God's command for all members of the Body of Christ to serve each other in love using the unique gifts God has given them.

## Activity

Place a clean sheet of paper in the middle of the group. Ask each person to contribute at least three things (more are welcome) that the church does for church attenders. Leave the list out where everyone can see it throughout the study.

*Possible Answers: Pray, helps, consoles, celebrates, counsels, teaches God's Word, gives, supports, shows mercy, shares Christ, provides resources, provides community.*

*Leaders' Note: Don't get hung up on the theological answer to this question. What are the practical things the church (meaning the people that make up the church) do for one another and the world around them? Also, please DON'T direct the group to think broadly; just see what they say.*

? When you were answering the previous question, how were you defining "the church" as you formed your answer?

*Possible Answer: The modern church and how it functions on Sunday morning, the body of Christ as the “capital C” Church, the things church leadership provides at Hope.*

*Leaders’ Note: Don’t get caught in a discussion on spiritual gifts. Refer people back to our study on the Body of Christ if they want to explore that topic further.*

Optional Transition: Let’s take a look at how the Bible defines “the church.”

**Read:** The Bible talks about “the church” in a couple of ways:

1. A local group of followers of Christ who gather as the Body of Christ.
2. The global collection of followers of Christ throughout time.

**?** When people hear the word “church” they often think of a building or location. Neither of these definitions involves a building structure. How does this compare to or challenge your childhood or current definition or the word “church”?

*Possible Answers: Growing up, the word church was always associated with a building that had a cross on it. It challenges me to think of it more as how people are united as the body of Christ compared to a building to go to each Sunday morning.*

Optional Transition: Let’s take a closer look at the two definitions listed above as used in the Bible.

## **1. The Church - A Local Group Of Followers Of Christ Who Gather As The Body of Christ**

### **Galatians 1:2 (NIV)**

Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—and all the brothers and sisters with me, To the churches in Galatia:

### **Romans 16:5 (NIV)**

Greet also the church that meets at their house.

### **Acts 8:1 (NIV)**

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

**?** Describe your experiences with the local church over your life. What made you feel close to or distant from that local body of believers?

**?** How does this small group serve as an extension of the local church called Hope Community Church?

*Possible Answers: It is a smaller community in the midst of a large community. We have the chance to serve, love, and support one another. We all offer unique talents and gifts.*

? How can this small group remind each other that we, as a body, make up Hope Community Church?

*Possible Answers: By looking for opportunities to serve and love one another in good times and bad, as well as looking for ways our group as a whole can serve the church body, local and/or global.*

## 2. The Church - The Global Collection Of Followers Of Christ Throughout Time

### Matthew 16:17-18 (NIV)

<sup>17</sup>Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

### Ephesians 1:18-23 (NIV)

<sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

### 1 Corinthians 15:9 (NIV)

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

? What do these passages say about the global church?

*Possible Answers: Gates of Hades will not overcome it. It's built on solid ground. Christ is the head of the church. We serve as the body of Christ/the body of the church. The church body represents the fullness of Him in every way.*

? In what ways do you participate in the global church?

*Possible Answers: Answers will vary. Missions, giving to different faith-based organizations, partnering with missionaries overseas, praying for Christians in other countries, etc.*

## The Church in Action

**Read Out Loud:** The Bible describes how the early church functioned. Let's look at a couple of those passages. While reading, stop and add additional items to the list you created earlier.

### Read Out Loud: Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the

faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

<sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. <sup>16</sup> From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

**?** According to the passage, what is the result of the body of Christ being properly built up as people serve using their gifts?

*Possible Answers: Vv. 14-16. Prevents harm, not tossed around, not deceived, positive things happen, grow in maturity, held together. Vs. 13—Helping one another, reaching unity in faith and knowledge of Christ.*

*Leaders' Note: Shame - The question below is not meant to be phrased in a way that evokes shame. Everyone looks back on paths they've chosen with greater clarity than they had in the moment they made a choice. The intent of the question is to inspire conversation about growth.*

Optional Question: We all often have to make hard choices about how to best use our time and gifts. Is there a time you've chosen not to use your gifting in the church and later wished you would have? What makes you wish that? How did that choice impact the body of Christ in that local church?

**Read Out Loud:** We're going to watch a short video from Naty next that further explains our role in the church.

*Play Video:* <https://youtu.be/Ev9tyUXwnHs>.

**?** What are your initial thoughts on the concept Naty just introduced?

**?** What do you see as your role in the church? Is there a way God is challenging you to use your gifts to bless the larger body of Christ at Hope?

**?** As you think of yourself and others "being the church to the church," what encourages you? What struggles or difficulties come to mind?

*Possible Answer: That I'm not alone. That it's reciprocal. That it reflects the Gospel and is a way for me to live out Christ's care and love.*

*Difficulties: Busyness and other life distractions. Uncertainty about how to go about it or what to do. Apathy. Failing to notice or assuming someone else will take care of it.*

? Looking back at the list you made tonight in small group, how is God challenging you to examine the ways you are serving as “the church” to the people in your small group?

**For Discussion And Accountability**

? What is one tangible way you can build up the body by serving as “the church to the church” this week?