

LEVERAGE YOUR LIFE

LEADER GUIDE

STICK TOGETHER

BIG IDEA: We are a family united by a mission.

DATE: Wednesday, April 29 and Sunday, May 3, 2026

SCRIPTURE: 2 Thes. 3:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:1-5; Acts 13:2-3

CONNECT

What do you like best about being part of a team? Why? What ideas or images come to mind when you hear the word family? Do you ever think of your family as a team? How could that change your family dynamics?

The truth is the church family is also a team – a community united by a mission. Today we are going to talk about the importance of STICKING TOGETHER – as a team on God' mission.

WATCH THE VIDEO

VIDEO OPTIONS:

- Watch the video together as a group using the YouTube app on the Roku streaming device in your LifeGroup room. The videos will be available on the Chets Creek Church YouTube channel. This week's video is 15 minutes long.
- Or watch the video on your own, take notes and share the highlights with your group. A link to the video can be found here: www.chetscreek.com/adults/lifegroups

DISCUSS:

What stood out to you from today's video teaching?

SCRIPTURE

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 (CSB)

In addition, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you, ²and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not all have faith.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 (CSB)

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that was given to the churches of Macedonia: ²During a severe trial brought about by affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³I can testify that, according to their ability and even beyond their ability, of their own accord, ⁴they begged us

earnestly for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints,⁵ and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us by God's will.

Acts 13:2-3 (CSB)

² As they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off.

DISCUSSION

If the church is a family united by a mission, does your experience as a Jesus follower align with that definition? Why or why not?

As individual followers of Jesus what are some ways we often contribute to the division and discord within the church? (It could range from wanting to do things "our way" or the "way we have always done it" or it could be interpersonal – gossip or unforgiveness towards another church member.)

What does it look like for you to be a uniter around the mission of God in our church? With other churches? How can you surrender your preferences, wants, and desires to leverage your life for the kingdom of God?

Consider the four activities listed below. If one church can't accomplish the mission by itself, where and how do you see churches working together to make a kingdom impact in our community? How can we join in those efforts or expand our current engagement?

Read all the Scripture verses above which were shared in the video. Show how they highlight the four areas mentioned in the video.

Leaders – write these four words on the board and record responses under each heading.

PRAY

GIVE

SEND

CARE

Here some thoughts to help get the ideas flowing:

Pray – Pray for the Good News to spread. We can pray for the fellow congregations as they seek to build up the kingdom. At times there have been prayer gatherings downtown Jacksonville where we have prayed for our city together.

Give – God fuels His mission from the generosity of His people. We give to Chets Missions which provides funding for the Cooperative Program supporting church planters and missionaries around the world.

Send – The church is a launching pad to send out believers to the ends of the earth. Chets partners with local and global missions, sending teams to Jacksonville, South Africa, Thailand, etc. Jacksonville churches send mission teams all over the world. One church could not possibly cover every people group or nation.

Care – The church is called to care for one another, especially those who have gone out as missionaries and church planters. We show our care by supporting and praying. Not all churches have the same capacity or call to the same care ministries. For instance, Chets Hodges and Southside both have ESL ministries; Chets Hodges has a Celebrate Recovery Ministry which draws people from different churches and the community. All campuses are partners with local schools. Ask your group what other Care Ministries or partnerships we have.

Here are three ways to stick together as fellow members of Christ's body:

1. Our one foundation, which is Christ.
2. Our one attitude, which is love.
3. Our one guide, which is the Holy Spirit.

Leaders flesh out these three points more by using the Additional Notes found below. Here are some questions to consider around these points as well.

Where have you seen the attractional power of unity at work? What happens when you meet someone and discover they are a Christian? (There is that immediate spiritual bond.)

When have you experienced God's love in a way that felt especially meaningful? How does knowing God loves you help you extend love to others?

What's one step you can take this week to submit yourself more fully to the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

PRAYER RESPONSE

When we seek God in prayer, He moves in power. "All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer..." (Acts 1:14) Spend some time praying out loud together around the following topics: for unity around God's mission; the Hodges Campus, the Palm Valley Campus, the Southside Campus; the church staff; the missionaries and church planters we support; the Pastor Search team and our new Pastor to be; for fellow churches in Jacksonville and around the world to be strengthened as they share the gospel.

We're all different—Jesus followers are people from every tribe and tongue and nation and age. We're different. Yet we are all living in submission to the same King. We're all passionate about the same kingdom. We're all pursuing and striving for the same spiritual goals, which means we can be unified by the same Spirit.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

DIVISION IS DESTRUCTIVE

There's no doubt the church has been declining throughout the northern hemisphere over the past century or so—first in Europe, then in North America. The statistics are undeniable with fewer churches and reduced portions of national populations who identify as Christians. In Europe and in North America, the power and influence of the church is fading.

There's no single answer that explains why this is happening, but one factor is certainly a major contributor: division.

There's nothing that diminishes influence quite like division. There's nothing that disrupts relational momentum quite like division. And there's nothing that destroys community faster or more effectively than division, discord, and in-fighting. It causes a sour taste even for people who aren't a part of that community.

Sadly, the modern church has experienced increasing division for decades. In many ways, we define ourselves by those divisions. This political party or that political party. This denomination or that denomination. This style of worship and that style of preaching. **Our preferences have become our biggest priorities.**

Paul called out the destructive power of division when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:10-12:

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ."

As individual churches and as the capital "C" Church or the global body of Christ, we will not regain our impact and influence until we address the divisions among us. If we don't make it a priority to stick together as a body, we will continue to fade.

UNITY IS ATTRACTIVE

We know that division is destructive within the church. And while our current experience as the body of Christ is being marred by disunity, we aren't the first generations to deal with that problem. In fact, there has been division in the church for as long as the church has existed.

That's the bad news.

The good news is that division can be healed! What's cracked and broken can be made new, especially when the power of God's Holy Spirit comes into play. And we have a road map for seeking that healing in the book of Philippians.

The Philippian Christians were dealing with significant strife within their congregation. Most notable was the presence of false teachers, which Paul strenuously opposed. But there were also relational squabbles that arise whenever people become invested in a community.

Look at this instruction from Philippians 4:2-3, for example:

I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Why did Paul spend precious biblical ink addressing a minor spat between two believers in a small congregation? Not just because division is destructive—but also because unity is attractive. Unity draws people in.

According to Psalm 133:1,

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

Which makes unity effective as a means of making disciples. And which is why if we are ever going to join in God's mission of making disciples, we must do it together. We must have unity.

This is why we must stick together as followers of Jesus. Remember, the church is a family united by a mission—which means unity is foundational for who we are. **Here are three ways to stick together as fellow members of Christ's body:**

1. Our one foundation, which is Christ.
2. Our one attitude, which is love.
3. Our one guide, which is the Holy Spirit.

Let's dive deeper into these three statements.

OUR ONE FOUNDATION: UNITED WITH CHRIST

How do we stick together? How do we pursue unity as the body of Christ?

Let's look at Philippians 2:1-4 to gain some instruction.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Now, many of the principles in those verses are super practical in and of themselves. It makes sense that we can develop unity by "being of the same mind." And the more we can let go of "selfish ambition" and "count others more significant" than ourselves, the more we will be uplifted by the power of unity.

But what is the foundation of those principles? What is the glue that holds them all together?

It's Christ. Look back at verse 1:

So if there is any encouragement in Christ ...

In Christ, you can pursue things like affection, mercy, and joy. In Christ, you can push for the same purpose and do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit. In Christ, you can develop the kind of humility that is necessary for genuine unity.

In Christ and only in Christ.

It's impossible for us to build unity and consensus as individual human beings. Just look at our families. Just look at our politics. Each of us has our own goals and our own opinions and our own pride. **How could we possibly stick together when each of us is so stuck on ourselves?**

The answer is for each of us to be united in Christ. When Christ is the foundation of your life *and* the foundation of your neighbor's life, then the two of you can be joined together—not by

willpower or slogans or even shared interest, but by Christ. We can stick together when we are together in Christ.

OUR ONE ATTITUDE: UNITY THROUGH GOD'S LOVE

If there's one thing people can agree about today, it's love. We all seem to have an intrinsic understanding that love is good and that hate is bad.

It's not surprising, then, that love is all over Paul's instructions for unity in Philippians 2:1-4. He encouraged the Philippians to **look out for the interests of others**—which we know from Jesus is the definition of love.

So, love is critical to sticking together. And yes, that means we need to love one another as Jesus followers. We need to actively demonstrate love and care to the people we encounter each day, and especially to our sisters and brothers within the church.

But look a little more closely at verse 1:

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love ...

Whose love was Paul talking about there? Not our love. He was talking about God's love. Specifically, God's love for us. Meaning, God's love is a critical factor in our ability to stick together.

This point is essential because it's hard for each of us to grit our teeth and "choose love" when things are going wrong.

It's hard to be loving when you've been wronged or when you're tired or when you really, honestly, genuinely just don't like that other person. We don't have the ability to love at all times and in all ways.

But God does. God always loves us.

Had a terrible day at the office? God still loves you. Made a bad decision as a parent or a spouse? God still loves you. Got overwhelmed and allowed a mix of negative emotions (anger, irritation, shame, and frustration) to spill out in ways that hurt others? God still loves you. Bought something you couldn't afford? Watched something you shouldn't have watched? Said something you shouldn't have said? God still loves you.

And because the love that God demonstrates toward you now resides in you, through His abiding presence, you have that same capacity to love. Not in your own strength but through Christ in you, loving others through you. Christ in you can love others even when you don't feel like it.

Because of God's love, you can contribute to unity within the church.

OUR ONE GUIDE: UNITED BY GOD'S SPIRIT

How can we stick together as members of the church? By focusing on Christ as our united foundation, by living out the reality of God's love for us, and by allowing ourselves to be filled and guided by His Holy Spirit.

Paul said in Philippians 2 that when we have “participation in the Spirit” we can be “of one mind” (vv. 1-2). Meaning, when we are driven by our own individual wants and needs and preferences, then we will experience division. But when Jesus followers are all pulled in the same direction by the Holy Spirit living within us, then we will be unified.

Paul wrote something similar in Ephesians 4:3-6:

Maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Take a moment to think about being inside a packed stadium for a sporting event. It could be a football game. Could be hockey. Could be an Olympic event. The point is that you’re part of this crowd that is going crazy! Your team is winning, the clock is getting ready to run out, and everyone is on their feet and cheering with everything they’ve got.

Can you picture it? Can you feel the excitement in that venue? Hear the roar of the crowd?

Now, there would be all kinds of different people in that crowd, right? People of different demographics. People from different places. People of different ages. No two individuals in that crowd would be the same.

Even so, there would be a collective sense of unity within that crowd. You’d have all different kinds of people, yet they’d all be pulling for the same thing. They’d all be rooting and cheering and longing for the same goal—for victory.

In other words, everyone in that crowd would be joined in the same spirit. They would be united by their shared passion and shared desire.

The same can be true of the church. We’re all different—Jesus followers are people from every tribe and tongue and nation and age. We’re different. Yet we are all living in submission to the same King. **We’re all passionate about the same kingdom.** We’re all pursuing and striving for the same spiritual goals, which means we can be unified by the same Spirit.