

## Nov 26 – Small Group Leader’s Guide:

### Read Ephesians 4:1-6, 13

1. What unites Christians together and what divides Christians today?

*Answers will vary, but what generally unites Christians together are the primary doctrines of our faith: about God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, grace, etc. What divides Christians today are secondary doctrines: about baptism, communion, church polity, end times, social issues, etc.*

2. The late Anglican priest, John Stott, illustrated Christian unity as both unbreakable and breakable with the analogy of a broken family that is still united by blood, name, and marriage, but is actually divided because of unforgiveness, irreconcilable differences, greed, etc. In light of this, how are we as Christians to view and navigate our relationship with other Christians in the city and around the world?

*We must then view our relationships with other Christians as strained like that between estranged family members. It will take effort to reach out, to understand and recognize theological differences, and it will require dialogue, conversation, listening, and mutual respect. We must not view each other competitively or as us-vs-them. We bear the same Name of Jesus, and we have the same mission and goal in the world: to worship and make Jesus known to everyone, especially among us in the Church.*

3. As a sacrament, baptism makes visible the invisible unity that the Church has in the Holy Spirit. How does your baptism actually show your unity to at least your local church at Little Trinity?

*Baptism is no less showing up to your family in the Church. It means taking communion together, getting to know others as we are known, loving others as we are loved. It means participating as much as we are able in the corporate and missional life of our local body. It takes seriously the baptismal vows we reaffirm each year: to follow in the Apostles' teachings, the fellowship, prayers, and the breaking of bread, to repent together, to forgive, to strive for justice, to seek and serve Christ in all persons. We cannot do any of these things without showing up together.*

4. Living out your baptism means humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, and love among our Christian family. How can we foster in ourselves and in our community the faithful expression of baptism that unites us to one another?

*It will require intentionality, commitment, accountability, and renewed enthusiasm for the prospect of being together as a Christian body. Church needs not be boring or brutal. It needs to be a safe and enjoyable space where*

*every generation may find a place to participate, to be themselves, and to be challenged to change for the sake of Jesus. Therefore, it means being open to the risk of being in difficult relationships, in disagreement, in conflict, even in divisiveness.*