



MEADOWDALE



Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

The word *allos* is found 58 times in the Greek New Testament. It means “one another.” In most of the New Testament uses, “one another” indicates particular responsibilities that believers have toward each other. We are called to not just be a group that meets together on Sunday morning. We are called to support each other in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Where do you find your primary support as a Christian? With family members? With a small group? With co-workers? With Christian friends outside your church? Nowhere?

Jeremy mentioned several reasons we give to not be a part of meaningful Christian fellowship. Which of these do you believe is the number one reason? People are too busy? People don't see each other often enough outside of church? People don't see it as that important?

What experiences of Christian fellowship have you had? What were some of your positive and negative experiences?

Into the Word:

If we “one another” each other, the faith of believers grows, *and* their fellowship with each other deepens and matures. So what should we be doing together?

Support One Another-

Read Galatians 6:2. Life is difficult enough as it is, but where would we be without the church's help through the tough times—sickness, job loss, or economic hardship; wayward children; death; and other disappointments? When one person in the body of believers suffers, we should all feel his pain and help to see him through. Bearing one another's burdens is our way of fulfilling the law of Christ—that is, living out Jesus' own teachings and example.

Admonish and correct one another and confess your sins to each other.

Read Ephesians 4:25. As children we disliked correction and punishment. Anything that smacks of correction seems negative or a putdown. Yet we all fall short of our calling as disciples of Jesus. We need each other to point out when we stray; we need a place where we can let ourselves face reality, where we can confess our shortcomings and sins. We need a small group or a spiritual friend or a trusted spiritual mentor with whom we can be real. Correction in the church should never be done with a judgmental spirit, nor should it be vindictive or hurtful. Just as Christ offers sinners grace, Christians need to extend grace to those among us who have made mistakes.

Bear with one another, forgiving each other.

Read Colossians 3:16. Sin is really about relationships: we sin against God and we sin against each other. The glue that keeps communities like the church together is forgiveness—not excusing sin, but forgiving people for their sins, being reconciled to one another, and moving into the future with a fresh start. Forgiveness cleans out the residue of guilt between us. As God in Christ has forgiven us, we must forgive each other.

Looking at each of the “one another” passages above, discuss the following:

What are some specific behaviors that we are called to do in order to fulfill these commands?

Where are these commands being lived out in our Christian experience? (Where, in other words, do we experience Christian support, accountability, and forgiveness from and with other Christians?)

What are you personally being called to do by these “one another” commands?

Apply The Word

Psychologists say that a healthy society needs three elements: family, work, and a “third place” that is an open and inclusive social setting. The essential requirements of a third place are that it is “neutral territory where rank is forgotten, it is frequented by a core of regular attenders who foster interpersonal exchange, and conversation is a central activity.” (*The Great Good Place*, Marlowe & Company, 1999)

If a group of believers faithfully lives out the “one another” commands, does it meet the requirements of the third place? Explain why or why not.

Christian fellowship is a gift of the Holy Spirit but it also involves effort on our part. How can we both receive this gift and do what needs to be done to allow Christian fellowship to flourish?

Christian fellowship takes time and effort. What are you willing to give up in your busy schedule to enrich Christian fellowship in your life and those Christians with whom you relate? How is God calling you personally to take Christian fellowship more seriously?