

If you have limited time to prepare, this 3-step outline is a helpful tool for leading a small group discussion:

1. Read the text from Sunday's message.
2. What did you find most helpful/confusing/new/ that you did not understand from the message?
3. What were your big takeaways? How will you put these into practice in your life?

Getting Started

- Which portion of the Bible are you most familiar with—the Old or New Testament?
How do you think a deeper knowledge of the Old Testament could increase your understanding and appreciation of the New Testament?

Discussion

- What responsibilities do Christians strong in faith have toward weaker Christians (Romans 15:1-7)?
- Discuss how Romans 15:1-6 (that links humility, unity, and the example of Jesus) is reinforced by Philippians 2:1-11.

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ² Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³ For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." ⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:1-6)

So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:1-11)

- Share a few areas in your life where you would like to more consistently follow the example of Jesus.
- How have the Old Testament Scriptures provided endurance and encouragement resulting in hope in your life? (Consider the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Joshua, time of the Judges, King Saul, David and Solomon, the stories of the Kings of Israel and Judah and the Prophets)

- Paul offers a prayer for the Romans Christians in verses 5-6 and then instructions in verse 7. What, according to these verses, is a healthy church to look like?
- How does this quote illustrate this week's passage and provide a picture of how the Church is meant to function?

"The church is an orchestra, we are instruments crafted by the Artist. We play a score written for us by the Composer, which allows our individual notes to create harmonies. Having tuned ourselves to the Perfect Pitch living within us, we play as one, interpreting the Composer's masterpiece with passion and precision, And the result is stunning; we display the glory of God!" – Chuck Swindoll

- Verses 5-7 use the phrases "endurance", "encouragement", "spirit of unity", "harmony", "one voice", "glorify God" and "accept one another." When have you experienced one or more of these with other believers?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for accepting and loving me in spite of my weaknesses. Where I am weak, help me to live by convictions born of faith. Where I am strong, help me to accept others' weaknesses. In all things, may I contribute my love to the unity of the body of Christ so that those outside the body will know that I am a disciple of Christ.