

Community—A Messy Community
Study Questions
Romans 15:5-7; Ephesians 4:31-32

Warm-up

1) What's something that you would find hard to part with, but that no one else would really want because it's so old or messy (for example, a favorite hat, car, grill, or coat, etc.)? What's makes that things so special to you?

A little deeper

2) [Romans 15:5-6] Romans 15:4 mentions how the Old Testament teaches us endurance/patience and gives us encouragement, then these verses continue the thread. **How does Paul suggest we apply the patience and encouragement we receive from God? Why should we be patient with one another?**

3) [Romans 15:7] What does it mean to “accept” or “receive” one another as Jesus did for us? **Once someone is accepted as part of a family or community, what is expected of them? What is expected of everyone else concerning the newly accepted person?**

4) [Ephesians 4:31-32] When someone hurts or offends us, we're not to “get even” or “make them pay.” **What can we do in addition to forgiving the offender, so that we can accept the person while also discouraging continued offense?**

Bringing it home

5) Is there someone that you're having difficulty forgiving or accepting (perhaps even yourself)? If there is, and you're willing share with the group, try to do it without naming any names. **Where can you find the patience and encouragement needed to begin building or repairing the relationship?**

6) Many times, our lives are so busy that we don't seem to have the time or energy to “deal with” other people's messes, especially people we don't know. Is there a change that you could make to your routine that might free up the time and energy you'd need to be Jesus' hands and feet to a “messy” person? Are you trying to do too much on your own? Think of a couple of ways others could help lighten your load so that you could help with another person's burden.

Prayer

7) Thank God and praise Him for the grace and mercy he has had with you and those you love. Then ask God for whatever you need to forgive and accept those you are having difficulty with. Ask Him for eyes to see opportunities to share your burdens with others so that you can be ready to share theirs.