

Introduction:

1. Think about 1 or 2 people who have deeply influenced you. They've left a mark on your life. What was it about that person that they influenced you so much?
2. When have you been annoyed that someone was paying attention to their cellphone more than to you? When have you annoyed someone by paying more attention to your cellphone than to them?

Understanding:

3. Sharing your weaknesses and fears can be difficult. See James 5:16. Why is prayer so important in this?
4. Read Proverbs 4:7. How important is seeking wisdom? In what area of your life would you benefit most by seeking wisdom from other believers?
5. In "Oh, the Places You'll Go!" Dr. Seuss says:
"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You're on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who'll decide where to go..." Contrast this quote with what we heard in today's sermon. When are you most likely to fall into the trap of behaving like this Dr. Seuss quote? What is the remedy?
6. In community we are asked to forgive each other as the Lord has forgiven us. See Matt. 6:12, 14–15. Is forgiveness optional? Just How important is forgiveness?
7. In v. 15 "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" actually means to let Christ's peace be a referee in our hearts. Think of a situation where you have a choice between a peacemaking and warlike response. How does Jesus as a referee guide you to the peacemaking response?
8. In the Old Testament the Israelites were God's chosen community. Were they by and large successful? Why or why not? Give examples.
9. Read Acts 2:42-47. Here is a description of Christian community 2000 years ago. How many parallels can you find between this passage and what God is calling us to live like in community in 2015?
10. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 contains an excellent description of how we interact in community. Does this say that love means we should only say nice things to each other? Explain.
11. God calls us to be transparent. Read Ephesians 4:25 and 2 Corinthians 1:12. By the power of Christ in us, what are we told to put off from our lives and what should we put on in our lives? What encouragement does this give you for growth in your own relationships?
12. The Greek word koinonia is often used in the New Testament to give an idea of the biblical meaning of community. Read 1 Corinthians 10:16. Your bible may have "participation" or "share" but we are talking of the word for community, koinonia. What does this say about why we do not take communion on our own? What does it say about our connection to our brothers and sisters in Christ as we take communion?

Application:

13. We heard that "25 percent of Americans have *no one* to confide in when they have deep struggles in their life." To what extent can Small Group counter this? How can you enhance this in your own Small Group?
14. Colossians 3:14 (Living Bible) says "Most of all, let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony." When is it the hardest for you to stay in harmony? What steps can you take to change this?