



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Guide – Feb 22/23, 2025

GATHER

Deeply rooted by sharing life seeking the presence of God.

This community based context can to heighten your awareness of God's presence in your time together, and give one another space to talk about what's really going on in life.

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- "Let's start with prayer."
 - What is one thing you're really grateful for right now? Take turns and share one by one.
 - Does anyone have a story of where you've seen God at work? Is there a life situation or answered prayer we can join you in celebrating? (This can be a way to revisit prayers or plans from a previous meeting.)
 - What is one thing you're really burdened with right now? If comfortable, take turns and share one by one.
 - What are you praying about right now? How can we join you thanking God or seeking God?
 - End with prayer, or move to the Grow and/or Go sections in the pages below.

GROW

Deeply rooted by being formed through the word of God.

This biblically based content overlaps with the current weekend teaching at your Northview campus and positions you, as a group, to be shaped by studying Scripture.

- **Pray.** Acknowledge God's presence + ask for his help to hear what he's saying through the text.
- **Share a takeaway from the Feb 22/23 sermon.** "Is there something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?"
- **Facilitate a brief study of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13**

Start the conversation with an "Icebreaker."

In today's passage, Paul addresses a new topic that seemingly interrupted the growth and flourishing peace in the Corinthian Church. Let's not forget that they dragged their own brothers and sisters in front of unbelieving courts and judges. It is with this in mind that Paul casts a vision for how to deal with disagreement in the church.

Share from your life to get a feel for this dynamic in the text - while also helping others get to know one another - by using this **Icebreaker question: Share an experience from your life, or a scene from a movie where a stronger party looked out for someone weaker and helped them, perhaps even at their own expense** . (What about this "heroic" act makes this memorable?)

Study Step 1: Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Familiarize yourself with this section of verses.

Study Step 2: Understand Their Story

Ask *observation questions* to understand what the author is communicating to the original audience.

- **Take a look at 8:1-10.**
 - Paul tackles a new issue in the church of Corinth. What is the central idea about knowledge Paul articulates in verse 1?
 - It is safe to say that Paul is not against wisdom and accumulating knowledge (e.g education), after all he prays in Col. 1 that the church would grow in knowledge of God's will. The knowledge referred to here is particularly in the context of eating foods offered to idols.¹ What do you learn about idols in 8:4-6?

¹ The way one ought to "know" is related to love. Probably, in light of 13:12, the point is that the Corinthians are infatuated with abstract theological or philosophical knowledge but remain woefully deficient in their knowledge (and love) of God. True theological understanding, and certainly true knowledge of God, does not lead one to act in a way which is insensitive to others and offensive to God. - Ciampa, Roy E., Rosner, Brian. *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC))

- 8:7-11 Paul introduces two categories of Corinthians with regard to the specific knowledge described in 8:4-6 (that idols have no more bearing). Therefore, two kinds of consciences of eating meat sacrificed to “gods”. Find out verse by verse what Paul teaches about eating this food and how this relates to one’s conscience and sin?²
- **Take a look at 8:11-13.**
 - Paul challenges how the Corinthians related to one another in their different approaches to knowledge. How were they supposed to live, love and treat one another, what are the dramatic consequences?
 - *Reflection question. This passage introduces us to the challenge of not putting a “stumbling block” in other Christians paths (those who have a weaker conscience). Since we don’t necessarily deal with food offered to idols anymore, what could be some examples in today’s world, where Christians have different consciences? (e.g tattoos, drinking alcohol).*
- Take these observations into the next step below.

Study Step 3: Connect To God’s Story

Ask questions to understand how this text fits in the larger gospel story.

We’ve selected a few connections that are here to a) expand on the content of the passage and/or b) clarify the content of the passage.

- In 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 Paul talks about idols and although he acknowledges that eating food sacrificed to idols is not sin in itself, it is worth looking at why some Corinthians have a “weak conscience” around the topic of idolatry.
 - **Skim Isaiah 44:9-20.** What does Isaiah say idols are like? How does this align with Paul’s statement that idols are nothing at all and yet there are many?
 - **Now look at Deuteronomy 6:4-9.** What is the clear contrast?
- Paul stresses that eating the food was not the issue but rather, the conscience behind it. Let’s see what else Paul says about Christian freedom!
 - Get different people to look up and read **Galatians 5:13-14, 1 Peter 2:16 and 1 Corinthians 10:23-24.** What do you learn about freedom? And how does it relate to sin?
 - On the flipside there is a danger in putting one’s conscience on others and creating “rules” for others that would impact their conscience! Read **Matthew 23:4, 13.** What did the Pharisees legalism look like and what were the consequences?
 - *Reflection: How does the gospel help in navigating “disputable” matters?*
- What the Corinthians needed to learn is *that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak*³. The language of *rights* probably comes from the Corinthians themselves. Paul encourages Christians to love one another and steward their conscience well. Look up **Romans 14:1-23** and consider what the outworking of the gospel looks like in our conduct with other believers..

² If you need a hint, read Jas. 4:17, Romans 14:14

³ Ciampa, Roy E., Rosner, Brian. *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (PNTC)

- List all the commandments that Paul gives to the church in this passage!
- *Reflection: Which of these challenges you the most and why?*

Step 4: Apply To Our Story

Ask questions to discern what God is telling us to do with the help of the Holy Spirit.

- Are there areas in your life in which you might tempt others to stumble? Are there attitudes or rules you have created that might tempt you to look down on others?
- How can the church grow in true knowledge of God and love for one another?
- Share some stories of people who have navigated “disputable matters” well! Can you think of someone who limited their “freedom” in order to prevent someone from stumbling?
- How should we pray in light of today’s discussion?
 - Thank God for real freedom and the church community in which we look out for one another.
 - Go back to the list in Romans 14. Pick a specific command and pray that we as a church would live in light of the gospel.

GO

Deeply rooted by participating in the mission of God.

These culturally relevant applications are meant, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to prompt actions that bring the life of God’s kingdom into us and out to others.

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- Pray for those far from God that you personally know, by name.
 - Is there something that seems especially relevant for us to do personally based on our discussion?
 - Is there something we as a group should plan to do together based on our discussion?
 - Is there something we as a group should plan to do to spend time with someone who doesn’t yet follow Jesus? Or to make/strengthen connections with our neighbours?