



Discussion Guide

Date: 10/19/2025

Sermon Title: Does teamwork really make the dream work?

Scripture: Romans 12:14-21

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, you have called us to live not as isolated believers but as one body in Christ. As we open your Word, teach us how to make room for others in our shared life of faith. Give us humility, patience, and love that reflect your grace at work within us. Bind us together in the unity of your Spirit so that we might live in harmony and peace. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Opening Question:

1. What do you love about your church? What is currently helping you to live out our mission of welcoming, growing, and serving?

Scripture Context and Reflection:

Paul's letter to the Romans moves from deep theological reflection on God's mercy and grace (Romans 1–11) into practical teaching about how believers are to live together as the Body of Christ (Romans 12). In this passage, Paul describes what true Christian community looks like — a life marked by humility, empathy, forgiveness, and overcoming evil with good. Paul reminds us that teamwork in the body of Christ is not built on efficiency or shared goals alone, but on Christ-like love and mutual care.

This echoes John Wesley's vision of Christian perfection — growing in love for God and neighbor — and his emphasis on "social holiness," the belief that we grow in faith not in isolation but in community. As Wesley wrote, "The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness." (Preface to Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1739) In other words, teamwork in God's kingdom is not optional — it is essential to who we are as disciples.

Digging into the Word:

Read aloud: Romans 12:14-21 (NRSV) and a few other versions if you or group have them.

1. What words or phrases stand out to you in Romans 12:14–21?
2. How do Paul's instructions challenge common attitudes about how we respond to others — especially those who oppose us or think differently?

3. Paul says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." How do you see this lived out in your small group, church, or community? What makes it hard for us to "live in harmony" as Paul commands?
4. Paul calls believers to vs 14 "bless and do not curse." What might blessing someone who has wronged you look like in practice? Can you think of a time when returning good for evil changed the outcome of a relationship or situation?
5. Wesleyan theology teaches that God's grace shapes us within community through accountability, encouragement, and service. How have you experienced this in your faith journey? What might it mean for our church to model "kingdom teamwork" in how we serve, listen, and welcome others?
6. Paul closes with "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." What does this look like in a world that often celebrates winning over serving?
7. How can our shared experiences of grace and service become a witness to God's goodness in a divided world?

Other scriptures to consider:

1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Philipians 2:1–4; Galatians 6:2; John 17:20–23

Sermon Questions:

1. Pastor Clayton mentions that Paul emphasizes that Christianity is a 'team sport.' In what ways have you experienced the benefits of Christian community, and how can we strengthen this aspect of our faith?
2. Pastor Clayton mentions that "culture eats strategy for breakfast." What does this mean to you in the context of building a strong church community? Can you think of examples where a positive culture has made a significant impact?
3. In the sermon, the culture of churches is to bless others and not blame others. How do we practically live out our faith in the culture of today that blesses others?
4. The early church was counterculture, and it was pointed out how different they loved one another and how they loved others. What is difficult about blessing those that persecute, ridicule and are not?
5. How can we develop and practice empathy as the 'secret sauce' of Christian community? What challenges might we face in doing so?
6. The sermon discusses overcoming evil with good. Can you think of a time when you or someone you know successfully applied this principle? What was the outcome?
7. Pastor Clayton emphasizes overcoming evil with good. What are some practical ways we can respond to negativity or hostility with kindness and love in our daily lives?

Applying it:

1. The sermon mentions the early church was known for how they loved one another. How can our modern church recapture this reputation in today's society? How can we cultivate a church culture that focuses more on blessing than blaming? What practical steps can we take to embody this in our daily interactions?
2. What does it mean to you personally to 'live peaceably with all, as far as it depends on you'? How might this impact your interactions with those who hold different beliefs or viewpoints?

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3. What is one concrete way you can practice shared life and teamwork this week — in your small group, workplace, home, or community?
4. Who is someone you could bless, reconcile with, or encourage in Christ's love?

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for calling us into the body of Christ; a family bound together in your love. Help us to make room for one another with grace and humility. When differences arise, teach us to respond with blessing instead of blame. When challenges come, remind us that we are not alone but joined in the work of your kingdom. Strengthen our teamwork, deepen our compassion, and send us out to overcome evil with good, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND (or challenges for you this week)

1. This week, commit to intentionally blessing three people (through words, actions, or both) who you might be tempted to criticize or blame.
2. Practice active listening with someone this week. Focus on understanding their perspective without offering solutions or judgments.
3. Reflect on how you can contribute to building a culture of blessing, empathy, and overcoming evil with good in your small group or church. Share your ideas at the next meeting.