

# commitment sunday

EPHESIANS 3:20-21

## FACILITATORS:

This is the final portion of our The House We Build Together series. This passage from Ephesians is short, but potent. To appreciate the passage, our theme throughout the last month, and the culminating moment we've come to in the Together Campaign, the focus of this discussion will be sharing individual stories about God's work in and through us.

We will prompt the group to share different stories about themselves. For some of us, sharing about ourselves comes easily. For others, this is more difficult. For those who might struggle to share their own stories, we will also provide a prompt for the group to share a story from the Bible, or about another person's faith story, that has affected them and grown their faith. We encourage you to embrace the informal, organic nature of this discussion.

If there are any stories shared this week that you would like to share with your fellow facilitators, or with the whole church community, we would love to hear them. If such a story comes this week, ask the person sharing it if they'd like to share it with other small group facilitators or with the church, and then email us these stories (in your words or their) at [dkidd@ualc.org](mailto:dkidd@ualc.org). We will determine how to share these stories on a case-by-case basis, and do so with the permission of the storyteller.

## INTRODUCTION FOR THE GROUP:

This is the week of our Together campaign's Commitment Sunday. Throughout these last several weeks we have anchored ourselves to, and meditated on, Ephesians 2:12-22, and other related passages. Many, if not all, of us have committed in some way or another to devote ourselves to the Lord in a new way; be it through financial gifts, serving or loving our neighbors, and everything else God's Spirit has called us to give. We can do this because, as our passage today proclaims, we know that the Lord can take us and our gifts and use them in unimaginable, immeasurable ways according to his power.

This week, we will spend our time exploring together stories about how the Lord has acted in ways beyond what we could measure or imagine. For some of us, telling stories comes naturally; for others, it might feel uncomfortable. But one of the most important things each of us has to give to this body of believers is our own witness to God's work in and through us. We encourage you to share as you're able, knowing that we all want to hear your story and we will be blessed by them.

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## OPENING QUESTION:

- What was your favorite story as a child? What do you remember about that story now?

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## OPENING PRAYER:

Pray something like: *Gracious God, thank you for all of the ways you have blessed your creations, the ways you've blessed us. As we take this time to share our stories of your goodness, faithfulness, and power today, we seek to praise you, honor you, love you, and know you more. Amen.*

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## SCRIPTURE:

Have someone read Ephesians 3:20-21.

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## DISCUSSION:

- Share with the group an example of a story you've read in the Bible, or of a Christian in history, that has influenced your faith or beliefs about the Lord.
  - Facilitators, you may want to lead with an example on this first prompting. How and what you share will set the tone for the stories ahead, and hopefully rouse participation.
- In what ways have you seen the Lord work in surprising, powerful, or remarkable ways in the life of your family or other people in our church community?
  - Consider stories and instances where the Lord did something big and impressive all at once, and also ways that God has acted in meaningful, powerful ways gradually—maybe over the course of years.
- Share a story or two about how God has acted in you or through you. How has your faith changed as a result of that experience?
- How does sharing stories with each other like these benefit the church?
  - Sharing stories about the Lord allows us to discover new ways of glorified, worshipping, appreciating, knowing, and loving God. Because Christians are called to

mourn with those who mourn and celebrate with those who celebrate, we are invited into loving one another in grief and in joy. Our shared stories bind us together, teach us about each other, and allow us to honor the One who is worthy of all praise.

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## **PRAYER AND MINISTRY:**

Open with a prayer of thanksgiving for all the incredible ways the Lord has been at work that were shared in this time.

For those who have made commitments to the Lord this week, invite the Lord to empower them and give them grace to follow through on those commitments, and pray that God would use each of our gifts to do amazing, unimaginable things according to his will and power.

For those that need God's help and faithfulness now, hear their requests together and pray that the Lord will answer them.