

we   
ARE  
Family



## SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR CONNECT GROUPS

13 & 14 AUG 2022

“LIVING AS GOD’S FAMILY”

MARK 3:31-35; EPHESIANS 2:18-22

### Suggestions for Making the Most of your Group Time

1. Begin by reviewing the video of the sermon, preferably before you meet together (see <https://www.brmc.org.sg/services/sermons/>).
2. Read the Scripture passage together, before entering into discussion.
3. Spend time on both question components, namely:
  - a. Comprehension (*Who? What? When? Why? How?*);
  - b. Application / Transformation (*So what? What action should I take? Perspective should I adopt? Value should I uphold? Emotion should I embrace? Habit should I develop? Desire should I nurture? etc*)
4. Discuss as few or as many questions as best fits your group’s current context and present stage in life.
5. Before ending your group session, allocate some time (15-20 min) to pray with and for one another.

## Discussion Questions

1. From your review of the sermon and your reading of the Scripture passage, recap the key points of this sermon.

2. Read Mark 3:33-35. Imagine yourself as one of original Jesus' followers hearing Him speak these words. How would you feel about being identified as Jesus' brother, sister, or mother?

3. Ephesians 2:19 identifies Christians as "no longer strangers and aliens, but ... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,"

a. How does this truth affect our attitudes and actions towards fellow believers such as: domestic helpers, construction workers, cleaners, and others who are outside our socio-economic circles?

b. The Baptist pastor and professor Dr Russell Moore wrote: "What would it mean, though, if we took the radical notion of being brothers and sisters seriously? ... What would happen if your church saw a white millionaire corporate vice president being mentored by a Latino minimum wage-earning janitor because both know the janitor is more mature in the things of Christ?" (*Adopted for Life*)

i. What would a culturally equivalent image of this look like in our church?

ii. Is this too much of a "radical notion" for BRMC? Discuss.

4. The Bible's call towards a spiritual family assumes authenticity and accountability (A&A) in relationships.

- a. Ask CG members to rate your group's A&A quotient from 1 to 10. (1 = totally superficial; 10 = fully honest/vulnerable/safe).
- b. Allow each member to take turns sharing their rating and to explain why he/she gave that rating.

5. Read Ephesians 2:21-22. With the death and resurrection of Christ, the temple of the Old Testament has been transformed into a temple of believers (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-6). This temple, according to v22, is to be "a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

- a. Do you think / feel / sense that BRMC is a place where God's Spirit is pleased to dwell in? Why, or why not?
- b. If not, how can your CG be part of BRMC's renewal in the days ahead?

### **Prayer Items**

6. C.S. Lewis wrote: "You have never talked to a mere mortal... it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit — immortal horrors or everlasting splendors." (*The Weight of Glory*) Would you pray that:

- a. Your senses would be awakened to the very image of God your neighbours. That your eyes would see their eternal worth in the Father's eyes. That your hands would be moved to love them in new and creative ways.

- b. BRMC would fulfil its calling as a family of believers united in the love of God. That whatever social, economic or relational barriers we have put up would fall, and we would be a temple God would be pleased to dwell in.

7. Pray for one another, that we would be empowered by God to live out the specific areas of application and transformation raised during the discussion time. Pray also for any needs that were mentioned.

### **Further Background Information**

#### *The Family of God*

In the New Testament, the assembly of the people of God is spoken of in different terms and different images, one of which is a new family.

In Galatians 4, Paul writes of our adoption as heirs of God, through Jesus' work of redemption. Similarly, Ephesians 2.18 illustrates the creation of a vertical relationship between Christians and God the Father, mediated through the Holy Spirit, who dwells within each person who trusts in Jesus (1 Cor 6:19).

Ephesians 2.19 likewise illustrates the horizontal relationship that believers enter into, being made "fellow citizens with the saints", rather than "strangers and aliens". This radical fellowship is what Jesus talks about in Mark 3, ordering our relationships with each other based on our relationship to him.

Verse 20 illustrates the framework within which these vertical and horizontal relationships are set: Christ is the "cornerstone" — the first basis — of the foundation built by the apostles and prophets for the new universal Church.

Verses 21-22 illustrate God's purpose in creating this new family: to build us into a "holy temple", a "dwelling place" for himself in our midst. This is a culmination of both the vertical and horizontal relationships. For God dwells not only in each individual Christian, but he also indwells us corporately, as we "are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God."