



**New Community Group
Launch Material - Part 4: Humility**

Welcome:

Greet one another by giving everyone a high five.

Opening Prayer:

This week of the Launch Material will be centered around our church's value of humility and will involve a group exercise that is designed to expose our neediness to one another. In light of this, open your time together by asking God for whatever help the group may need to be able to engage wholeheartedly in the exercise. Pray for gentleness, courage, bold vulnerability, and honest confession.

Read:

Value - Humility

Last week, we focused on our value of faith, emphasizing faith not just as an individual conviction but a value that ought to shape how we relate to each other. Only God knows everything, we said. Our task is to trust Him, and let that trust shape our relationships. That idea of faith connects directly to this week's focus on humility.

Humility is the opposite of pride. Pride is essentially the heart posture and mindset of being a strong, independent, autonomous being. It is thinking you are above others or larger than them. In relation to God, pride is thinking you don't need Him because you've got this whole life thing figured out on your own, thank you very much. It is believing you are the one in control, sitting on the throne. And through the entire scope of Scripture, God teaches us that this proud thinking isn't just ugly, it's false.

Pride is rooted in self-deception while humility stems from truth. Charles Spurgeon defined humility as "making a right estimate of oneself." Accordingly, Dallas Willard says, "A vision of God secures humility. Seeing God for who He is enables us to see ourselves for what we are." So, humility depends on awareness of the reality of oneself, coupled with living in honest, vulnerable recognition of that reality. Pride is grounded in a false or dishonest estimate of oneself. Humility is the admission that you are small, relatively insignificant, and a meager member of the world rather than its ruler. It isn't hatred of yourself, but actually loving yourself as you truly are and accepting love in this light. Another way to think about humility and pride is in the terms of being real versus being artificial. Pride is living as a contrived version of yourself, either overestimating or even underestimating who you are, while humility is simply being genuine to who you truly are.

Nothing could be more important to the health of a Christian community than humility, because nothing can be more important to the Christian's soul than humility. The battle of the Christian life is to be more truthful, more honest, and in a word, more humble. For Christ so humbled Himself. And, pride is the original and ultimate sin. So, for each member of your group to be healthy, mature, loving, and able to connect meaningfully with the rest, you must practice humility.

Practically, this looks like having a right and honest understanding of how you engage with the group, especially in discussion. When we discuss hospitality, we will focus on listening well. In this lesson, we will focus on speaking well by sharing humbly. For some, this may mean speaking less than usual, while for others it might mean speaking more, worrying less often about how awesome (or awful) you might come off. It could mean changing what you say, or how you say it, or why you're saying it at all. For example, someone may say something in group that you think is wrong or unwise. Your judgment could be true. It could be totally stupid. However, you ought to posture yourself with humility by admitting that maybe your perspective isn't the only possible one and that perhaps you still have something to learn from this person. Also consider, are you constantly giving advice to others and always thinking about the next impressive thing you can say? Or, do you actually listen to those around you, hoping to learn from them?

Group Exercise - Practicing Humility:

This week, we will be engaging in a large group prayer exercise surrounding our value of humility.

Read and Reflect (15 minutes):

Read John 13:1-17, Philipians 2:1-18, and 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. Then sit silently for five minutes to reflect on the humility of Jesus and the invitation of God to boast in your weaknesses.

Sharing Needs and Asking for Help Exercise:

Reflect:

Take another five minutes to reflect silently on the following prompts:

1. What is one practical need that you have that others could help you with?
2. What is one way that someone in the group could help you with this need in the next week?

Note: We mean *real, tangible needs*. This is not about prayer requests. For example:

1. What is a physical or circumstantial limitation you are experiencing that you cannot adequately overcome on your own?
2. Are you in financial need?

3. Are you experiencing any strong emotions that make you feel the need for comfort, company, or care?

No need or topic should be off limits. Be brave and be transparent about money, relationships, and anything else that might feel too embarrassing to expose.

Share:

Use mutual invitation to have every single person express a need and ask for help. Practice vulnerability and humility both by being willing to share a need/request help as well as by being willing to help gently clarify the needs of others and sacrificially meet their needs. (A quick note about requests: they are not all automatically entitled to a “Yes” response. Sometimes, requests must be met with a No, which happens when individuals take honest inventory of what kind of help they are capable of offering.)

Respond:

As each person shares, allow the group to adequately respond before moving on. If more information is needed, ask clarifying questions. Once a need and request have been effectively communicated, pause for 30 seconds of silence to reflect on this request and then invite the group to respond. During the silence, consider:

1. Do you understand the request?
2. Does it seem like a fair request?
3. Are you able to meet the need as requested, or are there other ways you would like to offer your support?

Do not move on to the next person until the group has actually responded to the need shared. For anyone who is unable to articulate a need, take 30 seconds to hold this brother or sister before the Lord, and then allow the group to suggest a possible perceived need and offer for help. Use the following format:

Group member: “(Insert person’s name), I feel like you might *need* (insert perceived need). Is this true?”

Original sharer: either “Yeah I do need _____,” or “No I don’t need _____.”

If the response is no, allow space for another person to try again. If it’s yes, then continue by asking this person how the group can help with this specific need. If the person is able to articulate an action that would be helpful, sit with this and then respond accordingly. If he or she is unable to ask for help, repeat the above process by offering potential suggestions for what might be helpful commitments and allowing them to accept or reject the suggestions.

Debrief:

Discuss what this exercise stirred up in you personally and what it revealed about the community.

1. Did you love this or hate this? Why do you think it made you feel this way?
2. Were requests accepted and needs able to be met?
3. What did this exercise reveal about the neediness and/or privilege of this community?
4. How much vulnerability, interdependence and mutual trust exists so far within this community?

Pray:

Close your time by reading 2 Corinthians 4:5-12 aloud and praying for one another, expressing empathy for whatever you heard shared and confessing any pride or resistance this time stirred up in you.