

CONNECT:

- What were some of the peer pressures you faced growing up or who were you in rivalry with?

PRAISE:

- What have you learned about God's character this week?

SCRIPTURE:

- Read Philippians 2:1 - 4

CONVERSATIONS

- Have you ever had a time that you really struggled to be part of Ridge Church (or another church)? What made you "stand firm"?
- In verse 1, the Apostle Paul speaks of the work of Jesus, God the Father and the Holy Spirit in someone's life as being foundational for unity within the church. Is the work of God in someone's life enough of a foundation for unity within the church or does unity depend on more? Why or why not?
- In verse 1 the Apostle Paul also speaks of the importance of 'affection' and 'sympathy' when it comes to unity in the church.
 - Who is the most unlikely person that you have developed a genuine relationship with ('affection') because of what Jesus has done in your life?
 - How can we develop 'sympathy' for the position of someone that we disagree with if we aren't able to know their story?
 - How would you describe or define "emotional intelligence"?
 - How do you think emotional intelligence is created or developed?
- In verse 3 Paul speaks of having the humility to count others as more significant than yourself.
 - When you think of humility who comes to mind?
 - How do you think humility gets developed?
 - What does "counting others more significant than yourself" actually look like in a practical sense?
 - Where do you see "rivalry" pop up? How do you prevent rivalries or heal them?
 - How does comparing yourself to others lead to disunity in the church?
- How does a church 'feel' when there is unity verses when there is disunity? Why is unity so vital and valuable in the church?

PRACTICE (decide for yourself an area you commit to grow in this week or semester and share with your Community)

1. Forgiveness - Reach out to someone who has either been a rival or someone you've held conceit towards. Look for an opportunity this week (a phone call, a socially distant walk) to repent of your sin and seek forgiveness, or show them the grace forgiveness (even if you don't think they deserve it).
2. Service - Look for one specific, practical way you can "consider others more significant" each day. Cleaning up after someone else's mess, sacrificing your time for the sake of someone else, or any act (no matter how big or small) can work. Allow this to "transform your mind" as you live out the way of Jesus towards those around you.
3. Gratitude - Reach out to someone who at some time showed you kindness, sympathy, and counted you more important than themselves. Tell them what they did or said, how it impacted you, and how it showed you more of what Jesus is like.

PRAYER

- For Children's Ministry: for Sara Stanley, our summer intern, as she oversees VBS and our Sunday services through the summer. For wisdom and discernment for who God would lead this very important ministry.
- For our Ridge Church to stay connected to Jesus and each other.
- For our endurance in staying in unity as a church despite the fact that we are scattered.

