

# STUDY NOTES

## A LETTER TO THE ROMANS *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

[www.newcityphx.com/sermons](http://www.newcityphx.com/sermons)

The following content is based on the message “Habits of the Heart and Unity Over Uniformity” on 7/9/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

## PRAYER

*Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.*

## SCRIPTURE: ROMANS 15:1-13

## BEARING ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS

In verses 1-3, Paul is not only claiming that the death of Jesus the Messiah on the cross fulfills Scripture, but also that the Jesus who died for others should be the paradigm for Christian obedience. Paul says it another way in Galatians 6:2. “Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

- *In your experience, when were the times in your life that you felt the most love from others?*
- *Why do you think the love felt the strongest in these situations?*

## MORE UNITY

As we’ve read through Romans, we have continually seen a theme of unity. Shouldn’t we know this by now? Paul keeps bringing it up because he knows that Christians are prone to confuse unity with uniformity. True, unifying love takes practice and not just taking in information, so Paul continually comes back to it because it’s not just about acquiring the right information, but it’s about **the re-habitation of our heart habits.**

- *Where should the safest place be to practice how to love rightly?*

- *Practice involves success and failure. How has the church acted like an unsafe place for you to practice love?*
- *How has the church been a safe place for you to practice love?*

## ENCOURAGEMENT OF SCRIPTURE

Our own experiences and the sheer amount of time Paul spends on unity shows us that unity is hard to live out. So where can we get encouragement to live in unity with our brothers, sisters, and neighbors? Paul says that God gives us encouragement and hope through scripture—especially when the Scripture is read through the lens of Jesus who is the source of hope.

- *How does the whole story of God actually show God’s commitment to using real people to unite others to himself? Why is that encouraging?*
- *If the whole story of God is about uniting us together and to himself, why shouldn’t it surprise you that we need to hear about unity so often?*
- *How do you see that playing out in today’s culture?*
- *Discuss some specific ways to form new habits of loving your neighbor with your source of hope being Jesus.*