



THE UNITY COURSE

SESSION 2

PRAYING

The inevitability of disagreement and the problem of anger

1 > Opening prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
You call us to know your Father,
And be sanctified by your truth.
As we consider the reality of disagreement
And the call to live in loving unity,
Help us to work for that complete unity
Through which you say the world will know you.
Give us grace as we face moments of difficulty;
Remind us to hope that no situation is beyond your love;
And inspire our words through the work of your Holy Spirit.
In your name we pray,
Amen.

2 > Video track

Watch the video and discuss your response

OR

Book-group track

Review chapters 2 and 7 of Loving Disagreement



3 > Some suggested questions to prompt discussion

Disagreement is inevitable, but does the group think that it's inevitable that disagreements turn toxic?

How easy is it to be angry without falling into sin?

Does Jesus' anger towards religious leaders like the Pharisees justify Christians today arguing angrily with one another?

How easy do you find it to love your enemies? Can you think of a situation where you have managed to do this?

How useful a rule is James' encouragement to be 'quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry'?

How can prayer help the facing of disagreement?

How easy do you find it to confess anger and other related sins in the context of prayer?

4 > Bible Study

Read John 17:15-23

Why is unity among Christians important?

How does the unity between Father and Son then relate to the disciples, and subsequent generations of Christians?

How do truth and unity relate? Can you have one without the other?

Is 'complete unity' a realistic aim among Christians? What might that look like in your own context... and beyond?

5 > Personal reflection

This is an opportunity to reflect on all that has been discussed so far, and also to think silently about how the material relates to you personally.

Think of a disagreement you have faced, ideally one that involved another Christian. If you were describing this incident or series of incidents to an impartial observer, seeking to give a fair account of the situation, what would you tell them?

How much did you pray about it at the time, and how much have you done so since? Were those prayers easy or challenging to pray?

Have you reflected on how you and the other person or people spoke and/or acted in the initial stages of the disagreement? Can you identify behaviour that emerged early on (on either 'side') that was problematic, even sinful?

What from your perspective, if anything, was good about this disagreement? (We recognise that 'sweeping under the carpet' is never helpful – disagreements need to be faced, not denied, and disagreement can be creative as people appreciate the value of other viewpoints.)

How much of a challenge does anger present for you in the context of disagreement?

6 > An opportunity to share

Members of the group may wish to share something of their own personal reflection at this point.

Questions prompting discussion along these lines may be helpful:

What am I reflecting on particularly as a result of this session?

Where do I need to change?

How will I be praying about disagreement in the week ahead?



7 > Closing Prayer

The group may like to pray openly together; it may be that some space for prayers of confession (perhaps in silence) can usefully be included here; and/or the Chemin Neuf community prayer for unity can be used:

Lord Jesus, who prayed that we might all be one,
we pray to you for the unity of Christians,
according to your will,
according to your means.
May your Spirit enable us
to experience the suffering caused by division,
to see our sin
and to hope beyond all hope.
Amen.

