

Sermon for August 17/18, 2024
"Why Unity Matters " Pastor Aaron Buer



THREE THINGS TO KNOW

DON'T MISS THIS. BEYOND THE WEEKEND. Now is the perfect time to (re)commit to spending time with God daily. One great resource is the Ada Bible Church devotional called BEYOND THE WEEKEND. Monday-Friday, circle back through parts of the sermon to read, think, pray + act. Sign up to receive this daily devotional in your email at adabible.org/beyond-the-weekend/

GROUP VALUES. This August, we're focusing on **GROUP GROWTH.** Adding new members isn't just about numbers. It's an opportunity to grow in faith and fellowship. Reflect on how new perspectives can deepen discussions and strengthen your ability to grow more like Jesus. Pray for open hearts to receive the gifts new members bring and for wisdom to create an environment where all can flourish in their faith journey.

GROW AS A LEADER. Attentive listening is hard work but essential for a healthy, growing community. Read the article **THE GIFT OF LISTENING** at smallgroups.com. It provides helpful teaching and tips about listening well and creating space for your group members to share openly.

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Welcome to the second week of our sermon series, **POLITICS & UNITY**. This week, we discuss a prayer Jesus prayed for his disciples near the end of his time on earth.

ICEBREAKER

What's a hobby or interest that has surprisingly connected you with others?

Start your discussion by reviewing Pastor Aaron's hopes for our church throughout this series. Pray through these as a group as you begin your time together.

1. That no matter who you vote for, you'd feel welcome at Ada Bible.
2. That we would see politics through the lens of Jesus and not the other way around.
3. That we'd be curious about why our fellow Jesus-followers hold political views different than our own.
4. That we'd invite God to challenge us through this series.

5. That this series would bond us together as a church during this political season.

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Have someone read John 17:20-23 out loud.

What insights can we gain about Jesus's priorities from this prayer?

What connections does Jesus make between unity, glory and belief?

How might this prayer inform our understanding of the Church's mission?

Is there anything else that stands out to you in this passage?

THIS WEEK'S SERMON

Pastor Aaron Buer continued our Politics & Unity sermon series by discussing a prayer for unity that Jesus prayed for his disciples. As a group, recall some of the sermon's big ideas and main points.

Jesus selected disciples with wildly different political stances. How does this challenge or encourage your view of diversity within the church?

Our unity as believers can validate the Gospel to the world. How have you seen this play out (or not) in your own experience?

How might political disagreements in our church community hinder our witness to non-believers?

How have you seen the Gospel act as both a bridge and a sledge hammer?

How can we, as a small group, create an environment where people feel safe expressing different political views while maintaining unity?

Pastor Aaron emphasized the importance of seeing fellow believers as family. How might this perspective change how you interact with those who hold different political views within our church?

Have you ever had an experience in which listening to someone's story changed your perspective on a political issue? If so, what happened?

Pastor Aaron gave us phrases for mending relationships: "How did I come across?" "I'm sorry." "I forgive you." And, "Help me understand." Which do you find most challenging to use and why?

What is one specific step you can take this week to pursue unity with a fellow believer who holds different political views than you?

WRAP UP

This week, we discussed Jesus's prayer for unity among his followers. What from this conversation or the sermon encouraged or challenged you the most, and why?