August 9, 2026

ON THE WAY TOGETHER

Finding & Extending Belonging *in Jesus' Family*



SERMON: Belonging for the Sake of Others
SPEAKER: Pastor Steve
CORE SCRIPTURE: John 17:20-26

WATCH SERMON | SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMARY

Pastor Steve explored Jesus' prayer in John 17, revealing four dimensions of Christian belonging. First, belonging begins by sharing in God's own life—we are invited into the eternal communion of the Trinity. Second, belonging to Jesus means belonging to one another as family, united not by common interests but by a common life in Christ. Third, we belong for the sake of the world—our unity becomes a witness that draws others to believe Jesus was sent by the Father. Finally, our belonging anticipates God's future, when Christ will return and we will be with him in the new creation. The sermon emphasized that Cornerstone has been prepared for this moment, called to be a community of belonging that reflects Jesus' love to lonely and isolated neighbours in Markham-Stouffville and beyond.

SHARE

Think about a time when you felt truly known and welcomed into a community or group. What made that experience meaningful? Or, on the flip side, can you recall a time when you longed to belong but felt on the outside looking in?

READ

Read **John 17:20-26** together out loud as a group.

DISCUSS

Feel free to pick/choose what is most helpful for you. Remember the goal is to have rich, relational, authentic, Jesus-centered discussions.

1. What stood out to you the most about the sermon?

2. In verses 20-21, Jesus prays that all believers "will be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you." What does this text reveal about the nature of the unity Jesus desires for his followers? How is this unity grounded in the relationship between the Father and the Son, and what does that tell us theologically about the source and character of Christian community?

3. Pastor Steve said, “True belonging begins with belonging to God—and only from that foundation can we truly learn to belong to one another.” How does understanding that we belong first to God (rather than to each other) change the way we approach community and relationships in the church?

4. Look at verses 22-23 again. Jesus prays that our unity would be “so that the world will believe you sent me” and “that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.” How is the church’s witness to the world connected to the quality of our relationships with one another? What barriers to unity in the church might hinder this witness?

5. Pastor Steve shared several stories illustrating the loneliness epidemic in our culture—the senior adult whose world has shrunk, the teenager with hundreds of followers but no one who truly knows her, the newcomer to Canada starting over. Which of these stories (or similar experiences) resonates with you or someone you know? How might God be inviting you or your group to extend belonging to someone experiencing isolation?

6. In verse 24, Jesus prays, “Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am.” How does knowing that our belonging will one day be perfected in Christ’s presence give you hope or motivation in the present, especially when relationships are hard or unity feels distant?

7. Pastor Steve observed that Cornerstone has been prepared by God to reflect unity across differences—different ages, cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives. What practices or attitudes help us “bear with one another” and grow into the family we already are in Christ, especially when we don’t naturally see eye to eye?

NEXT STEPS

- **Reflect on your belonging:** This week, take time to pray and ask God, “To whom do I belong?” Allow the truth that you belong first to God—welcomed into the life of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to settle deeply in your heart.
- **Reach across difference:** Identify someone in the church or your neighbourhood who is different from you (in age, culture, background, or life experience) and take a step to build a relationship. Invite them for coffee, a meal, or simply a meaningful conversation.
- **Practice “one another”:** Choose one of the “one another” commands from the New Testament (bear with, forgive, encourage, serve, show hospitality) and intentionally live it out this week within your small group or church family.
- **Be a preview of God’s kingdom:** Think of one person in your life who is experiencing loneliness or searching for belonging. Pray for them by name and ask God how you might extend the welcome of Jesus to them this week.

PRAY

Spend time praying together as a group:

- Thank God for the gift of belonging to him through Jesus Christ and for welcoming us into his family.
- Pray for one another, that God would help each person grow deeper in their experience of belonging to him and to each other.
- Lift up the lonely and isolated in our neighbourhoods—seniors, newcomers, families with special needs, teens, and others longing for connection. Ask God to use Cornerstone as a community of

welcome and belonging.

- Pray for Cornerstone Church, that our life together would reflect the unity Jesus prayed for, and that our witness would draw others to believe in him.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to show each of you specific people to reach out to this week with the love and belonging of Jesus.

CONNECT

Check out **The Hub** for upcoming community **events**, **workshops**, or **serving opportunities** where your group can come alongside and extend belonging to others in our church and neighbourhood. Whether it's a newcomer welcome event, a ministry to seniors, or an outreach initiative, look for ways your group can participate in God's mission together.

CLOSING

As you go this week, remember that you belong—to God, to one another, and for the sake of the world. May the love and unity we share in Christ become a living invitation for others to find their place in God's family.