



## Dear Friends,

Choosing a favourite book of the Bible is like selecting which of your parents or children you love most. You just can't do that! Even so, one of the biblical books I keep returning to is Paul's letter to the Ephesians. When I read the Bible one-to-one with people, I often choose Ephesians. So, I end up reading it most years.

Why choose Ephesians? Because it is about how to mature as a Christian. That is not to say Ephesians is a "how to" book. Rather, Ephesians focuses on what God has done for us in Christ (chs.1-3) so that believers can live a life worthy of the calling we have received (4:1).

When Paul unpacks what a life worthy of our calling in Christ is, he makes it clear that church is integral to living for Christ. That makes a lot of sense. Christianity is not a solo activity. When God unites us to himself in Christ, he joins us by his Spirit to his family, the church. God's purpose, after all, in saving us in Jesus was to create one new humanity to be his people (2:15).

Being God's people means we are to love each other. If you don't belong to a church, the commands to be humble and gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love, and to keep the unity of the Spirit (4:2-3) make no sense. Just as humans flourish and mature in families, Christians do the same by belonging to church.

Which brings me to growth groups. It's that time of year when we plug them. We want you to join a growth group because fellow Christians help you grow to be more like Jesus as you study Scripture, pray, and do life together. God will also use you to similarly bless them.

*RPC's vision is to see every church member join a growth group to grow their love for God, to grow our community life and connection to each other, and to grow RPC's ministry.*

I have been a church member for more than four decades. Most years, I have been in a growth group. I learn from others' insights into the Bible. I value praying with fellow Christians. I appreciate people sharing their experiences as followers of Jesus. It's not all positive. But it's honest and real – as people share struggles and doubts, tears and laughter, hopes and despair.

Two other aspects of growth groups stand out for me. The first is how God uses others to challenge and show me how to live faithfully for Jesus. Last year, a new Christian in our group challenged me to be more courageous to speak about Jesus to unbelieving family, friends, and workmates. Thirty-odd years ago, Kathryn and I learnt from the examples of couples ten years older than us how to be godly in marriage and parenting. They didn't tell us what to do. We just watched them do it! That's what happens when you do life with others.

The other aspect of growth group that I treasure are the friendships. Kathryn and I are still friends with people from growth groups in past churches, dating back to the 1990s! Growth group provides a forum to get to know others and build relationships. Getting closer to others can be challenging because at some point, we do or say something that hurts them. Those situations offer Christians a chance to grow, as each of us faces the challenge to show grace – by forgiving someone who wronged us or 'fessing up and saying sorry to someone we wronged. When we act with grace, more often than not, relationships deepen and grow stronger.

If you were in a growth group last year, I hope you "press repeat" and do it again. If you weren't or you are new to RPC, I invite you to join a group so that you can grow in godliness and help fellow Christians do the same. If you are interested in joining a group or want more information, please contact Jenny Huynh at [jennychan.171@gmail.com](mailto:jennychan.171@gmail.com) or me at [marka@rpc.org.au](mailto:marka@rpc.org.au)

God Bless,  
Mark Adams