

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

How to Find Your Place
Ephesians 4:1-16

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Read Ephesians 4:1-16 and the Teacher Preparation section which follows. Think about the building process.

Near the end of the “Bible Study Plan”, you will find instructions for an activity involving paper hearts and envelopes. Be sure to read that section over several times so that the activity for the group goes smoothly and has the intended impact. Prepare the hearts and envelopes well in advance in order to avoid a last minute rush.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

Blest Be The Tie, *The Worship Hymnal* #389; CCLI # 25369 Public Domain

Bind Us Together, *The Worship Hymnal* #390; CCLI #1228

We are One in the Bond of Love, *The Worship Hymnal* #387; CCLI #14459

They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love, *The Worship Hymnal* #385; CCLI# 26997

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Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

How to Find Your Place

Focal Text

Ephesians 4:1-16

Background Text

Ephesians 4:1-16

Main Idea

God wants us to lead a life worthy of our calling as Christians, building up the church by exercising the gifts he provides us and engaged in the service to which he calls us.

Question to Explore

Are you doing what God wants you to do?

Teaching Aim

To help participants identify areas and ways in which God wants them to lead a life more worthy of their calling as Christians and thus build up the church.

Gathering together:

Pray for God's filling with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and understanding.

Sing

Bind Us Together, *The Worship Hymnal* #390; CCLI #1228

Read or recite the words to **Blest Be The Tie**, *The Worship Hymnal* #389; CCLI #25369 Public Domain

First thoughts:

Can you imagine a human body in which the parts are at odds with one another? I cannot even think of my hands being at odds with and refusing to cooperate with my eyes. As a human body cannot grow and develop when the body parts are not working together, so the body of Christ, the Church, cannot grow when the members are

working in isolation or at cross purposes from the other members. It has been said, you can't be human alone. The same can be said about the Christian's life. You cannot be a Christian alone. We need other Christians. You need church. The Christian life needs others to grow and to produce the fruits of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 describes the fruits of the Spirit and they are all about human interaction: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We need other Christians to keep a check on our spiritual temperature. It is the bond of love that enables the body, the church, to grow.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Conclude the Gathering Time with prayer that the fruit of the Spirit will be demonstrated in us.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

How to Find Your Place

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Background Text

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Introduction to your personal study:

Ephesians may also be called the “Body Building Book” because it is a guide to building up or developing the local body of Christ. It encourages spiritual growth in the believers who make up the body of Christ in the local church. As with physical fitness, the best results are seen with consistent attention to each believer’s spiritual walk.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

Ephesians 4:1-16 Living Your Faith

In the first three chapters of the book of Ephesians, Paul explored the theological basis for his teaching; including the doctrines of salvation and Christology or person of Christ. He now builds on that theological foundation as he lays out guidelines for Christian thought and behaviour.

In verse one of Chapter 4, Paul identifies himself as a “prisoner for the Lord.” See also Ephesians 3:1. Although Paul was actually under house arrest in Rome when he wrote this letter, he emphasizes that God’s sovereignty controls his imprisonment. Paul calls all believers to live their lives worthy of their Christian calling, to live out their belief-system in their daily activities.

Paul builds his charge to the local body first by addressing each individual believer in verses one and two. He next focuses on the unity among believers in verses three and four and finally calls for personal maturity of the believers and the body of believers in verses eleven through sixteen.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Our Calling Ephesians 4:1-2

Called to be Holy

At the beginning of this letter Paul noted that God chose us before the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). See also Romans 8:28-30. Why did God chose us this way? To be holy and blameless before Him! To be blameless before God is to be justified. Such justification is an act of grace, granted by God alone. It differs from sanctification which is the process of becoming holy, becoming more and more like Christ. Sanctification requires human cooperation. In light of the incredible grace which we have received when we were made blameless in Christ, we are to live a life which reflects our calling; we are to grow in sanctification. From the moment each believer accepts God’s gift of salvation, the rest of that believer’s life is a spiritual offering to God in thanksgiving. Paul calls it our spiritual act of worship. Romans 12:1.

Called for particular tasks

Paul describes believers as “God’s workmanship”, works of art (Ephesians 2:10). God designed each believer and uniquely gifted each one for the particular works which God has prepared for that believer to do. A part of our faith journey is to discover our unique design and giftedness and to develop those gifts in and for the particular areas of ministry God has planned for each of us.

Called into fellowship

Because God has called each believer, that believer is no longer a foreigner or alien, but a fellow citizen with God’s people. Ephesians 2:19. As members of God’s

household, we are being built together into the body of Christ, to become a dwelling place for God's Spirit. Ephesians 2:22. God grafts Gentile believers into His chosen family so that they become heirs together with Israel and become members of one body. Ephesians 3:6

Emphasis on Unity Ephesians 4:2-6

The first issue to be addressed by a believer who is attempting to live a life worthy of Christ's calling is unity. Paul lists four traits which are necessary to unity. These are humility, gentleness, patience and forbearance which is practiced in love. Ephesians 4:2. In order to be considerate of others, an individual believer chooses to put another person's comfort above his or her own. Such humility requires thinking more highly of the other person. Gentleness may be defined as "strength under control." A believer makes a conscious decision to exercise restraint for the good of another and for the unity of the body of believers as a whole. Patience is both the choice to delay gratification and to extend grace for another's wrong doing or faults. Both elements are necessary for a group to survive. Individual wants may have to be put off in order to achieve the best for the body. Individual idiosyncrasies will need to be overlooked. In love we are called to bear with one another. Because Christ loved us, so we also are to love each other. Philippians 2:2. Unity will not "just happen." Believers are urged to make every effort to glue the body together in peace. Ephesians 4:3. Jesus, Himself, is our peace. Ephesians 2:13-18. He has broken down the barriers that separate us. Only through His Spirit can we experience His supernatural peace and the unity of the body that He prayed for us. John 17:20-21.

This unity results from shared beliefs, experience and grace. Paul identifies three groups of three examples of unity using the three Persons of the Trinity, the ultimate example of unity.

Unity in the Spirit Ephesians 4:4

We are one Body, a single unified community of faith. Ephesians 2:13-18. The one Body is unified by God's Spirit. This same Spirit is the source of our one hope to which we were called, and the guarantor of our inheritance in Christ. This hope is so incredible that Paul has prayed that the eyes of our hearts will be opened so that we can grasp its magnificence. Ephesians 1:14 and 18.

Unity in the Son Ephesians 4:5

We are unified as believers under one Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. We have One in whom we believe. Furthermore, we share one faith in Jesus as Saviour. Acts 4:12. Finally each believer is identified with the body of believers as a whole through one baptism. Ephesians 1:13, 2:5-6.

Unity in the Father Ephesians 4:6

Over all this unity is our One God and Father. Ephesians 4:6. He is the supreme ruler over all. He is through all, from first to last; from beginning to end. God, Himself,

pervades our world. He is imminently present in everything and in each believer. John 14:23.

Individual Gifts Within the Unified Body Ephesians 4:7

Within this unified body of believers, under the triune unity of God, each believer is individually equipped for the specific work God has prepared for him or her. Ephesians 2:10, 4:7. Paul emphasizes here that Christ has specifically tailored the grace and gift for each specific believer.

Giver of Gifts Has Ascended on High Ephesians 4:7

Paul uses Psalm 68:18 speaking to Jesus' ascension on high, although that Psalm refers to receiving gifts for men rather than giving gifts. Paul notes that Jesus' ascent requires a prior descent into the lower, earthly regions. Ephesians 4:9. When Jesus was born a human baby on earth, He left His heavenly place. Galatians 4:4. However, when He ascended, He ascended higher than the heavens, and filled the whole universe with His presence. Ephesians 4:10. Jewish teaching included seven heavens, regardless of the number Jesus supersedes them all.

Gifts Given to Equip the Body Ephesians 4:11-12.

Paul emphasized in verse 7 above that Christ gives gifts "to each one." Yet here he lists not the gifts but the specific leaders to whom certain gifts are given. Among these are the apostles, those twelve comprising the inner circle of Jesus' earthly ministry and including Paul himself; the prophets who are coupled with the apostles in providing the foundation of the body. Ephesians 2:20. Next he lists the evangelists, those missionaries to the unreached; and pastors and teachers, whose complimentary roles feed the local body. Other scripture passages list specific gifts given to believers. See Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 28-30; and 1 Peter 4:10-11. The goal of each of these ministries is to build up the local church by preparing God's people for ministry. Ephesians 4:12. Paul never anticipated that the ministers would do all the work of the church, rather he envisioned a gifted body of believers who were grounded in Scripture and well trained as to how to implement their specific gifts to do the work of the Church. "Discipleship" or equipping necessarily would play a large roll in the ministry of the local church.

Growing Up In Christ Ephesians 4:13-16

Paul teaches that when all members of the body are working together, each using his or her specific gift for the work of the Lord, we will grow in faith until we reach unity in faith and maturity in our understanding of the person of Christ. Ephesians 4:13. Then we won't be like infants easily distracted and thrown off course by various teachings and intentional misrepresentations of the truth. Rather in our maturity we will easily discern such falsity and counteract it with the truth. Notably, such truth must be spoken in love. We will "grow up" spiritually and intellectually as we become more and more like Christ, the Head of the Church. 4:14; Colossians 1:18.

Paul concludes with the picture of the whole body in Christ growing and building itself up in love, as each part does its work. Key to our understanding is the importance of

each part of the body employing the giftedness with which God has blessed that part. Together each believer grows and in turn helps the whole body become more complete. When each part is working properly, the body receives its necessary support and can then continue to grow into its God-intended potential. 4:16.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Your task in leading this study is to guide your church to identify areas and ways in which God wants them to lead a life more worthy of their calling as Christians and thus build up the church. What we call “discipleship” consists of an ongoing, life-long search for ways to become more like Christ.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

How to Find Your Place

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Ephesians 4:1-16

Background Text

Ephesians 4:1-16

Main Idea

God wants us to lead a life worthy of our calling as Christians, building up the church by exercising the gifts he provides us and engaged in the service to which he calls us.

Question to Explore

Are you doing what God wants you to do?

Teaching Aim

To help participants identify areas and ways in which God wants them to lead a life more worthy of their calling as Christians and thus build up the church.

Connect with Life:

Begin by asking: What titles do you go by? Prompt the class if necessary with the following: Father, Mother, Teacher, Employer, Boss, Team Leader, Grandchild, Coach

Add: With each of these roles comes certain expected behaviours and responsibilities.

Look for answers for this idea: Do we have certain expected behaviours and responsibilities that come with the title “Child of God” or “Believer”?

Say: In this passage Paul urges us to live lives worthy of our calling. Let's see what he has to say about our behaviours and responsibilities.

Guide the Study:

Share the “**Background**” information from the Teacher Preparation. Note how Paul explored the theological basis for his teaching in the first half of the Letter to the Ephesians and is now building on that foundation.

Remind the class that Paul was under house arrest in Rome when he wrote this letter back to the Church at Ephesus.

Have someone read Ephesians 4:1-2.

Invite opinions on the “calling” each believer has received.

Review Ephesians 1:3-4, noting the incredible spiritual inheritance Christ gives to each believer.

Encourage suggestions to this: What does it mean to be called to be holy?

Help the group by defining “holy” as meaning “set apart.”

Explain: The term “sanctification” is used in the New Testament to describe the process of becoming more and more Christ-like, more holy.

Prompt the group to discuss our spiritual offering in light of Romans 12:1.

Explore the particular tasks God calls different believers to do. Note that each believer is uniquely gifted.

Discuss how parents look for and encourage gifts and talents in their children.

Say: Part of our faith journey is to discover our unique design and giftedness and to develop and use those gifts for God's service.

Add: The central message of faith is God's desire to be in relationship with human beings.

Discuss the importance of recognizing that we are called to be in relationship with both God and fellow believers.

Note that the term “fellowship” is used to describe that relationship.

Remind the class of how God grafts Gentile believers into His chosen family so that each believer shares equally in His inheritance (Ephesians 2:19).

Ask someone to read Ephesians 4:2-6.

Have the class list the four attributes Paul identified in these verses (humility, gentleness, patience and forbearance in love).

Ask volunteers to describe some examples of being completely humble and gentle. Note that these attributes and those of being patient and bearing with one another in love are evidence of Spirit-filled living (Galatians 5:22-23).

Discuss how our lives can be empowered and enriched by seeking to live in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25). Ask for comments on this idea.

Say: A key to unity in the body is recognition that becoming Christlike is a process and that each of us is at a different place as we grow in sanctification. Until we are fully mature it is highly likely that we will offend each other. Emphasize the need to extend grace to other believers.

Have someone read Ephesians 2:13-18, noting that Jesus, Himself is our peace.

Discuss the unity in the Spirit.

Say: This same Spirit was given to the Jews at Pentecost and to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. He can bridge the widest of gulfs and make one body out of diverse groups of believers.

If applicable discuss differences in the backgrounds and experience of the members gathered to study.

Ask: How does someone join our body of believers?

Discuss unity in the Son through shared faith. Note the picture of baptism as becoming one with the body.

Discuss the incomparable truth that the God of the universe has chosen to be in us!

Note for leader: As a picture of this unity, prepare a small paper heart with the Name "God the Holy Spirit" written on it for each class member. Give each one three envelopes.

Ask a volunteer to read John 14:16-20.

Request this of the group: Put the paper heart into an envelope and write your name on it. Then fold that envelope in half and put it into another envelope and write "God the Son" on it. Now fold that envelope and put it into the last one and label it "God the Father." Reread John 14:20.

Say: What an incredible picture of the unity of God and the unity of the body. Yet God does not stop there. He has chosen us in Him for a purpose.

Ask a volunteer to read Ephesians 4: 7-10.

Emphasize to the group the importance each individual is to God and the fact that each one has received a gift.

Have someone read Ephesians 4:11-13.

Encourage the participants to discuss the specific roles mentioned by Paul. Note that the goal of each of these roles is to prepare God's people for works of service to build up the body.

Seek another person to read Ephesians 4:14-16.

Question the group: How do the "infants" differ from the mature in this passage.

As needed, explain the importance of being prepared for deceitful teaching and the ability to discern the truth.

Discuss with your students the various areas in which we can exercise our calling as Christians, including work, family and community, as well as church.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the Youth!!! Take Ten page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Say: Throughout this passage Paul envisions a process of growth and maturity. Note the importance of speaking the truth in love as believers grow and mature.

Ask: How has God gifted you? How can you use those gifts for His service and glory?

Some resources that may be helpful: Ross West, Go to Work and Take Your Faith Too!(Smyth and Helwys, 1977); Mike C. Rogers and Claude V. King, The Kingdom Agenda: Experiencing God in Your Workplace (Saratoga Press, 1996).

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

How to Find Your Place Ephesians 4:1-16

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Part of our faith journey is to discover our unique design and giftedness and to develop and use those gifts for God's service.

Have slips of paper and pencils available. Ask each participant to write the name of someone else in the group and write down something they see as a unique gift which that person has. Encourage each person to think of something that others may not have noticed. (Avoid everyone commenting on the person in the group who has a great singing voice).

You may choose to read these aloud or you may place the slips in individual envelopes for people to read at a later time.

Say: One of our responsibilities as Christians is to encourage one another. Recognizing the gifts and talents of others and thanking them for using those gifts and talents is one way the body of Christ grows in unity.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***How to Find Your Place***
Ephesians 4:1-16**Beginning the Service:**

Sing

We are One in the Bond of Love, *The Worship Hymnal* #387; CCLI #14459

They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love, *The Worship Hymnal* #385; CCLI# 26997

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

Pray today that in all of the 639 people groups of over 100,000 people who are not yet engaged with the gospel some one will hear about and receive salvation and begin sharing with others in their people group.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Introduction:

Paul Tournier, a Swiss psychiatrist, says that there is a place for everyone, and claims that we are restless until we find that place. We may try to teach a child about keeping things such as tools and equipment in their place. We may remind him or her from time to time that there is a "place for everything, and everything should be in its place." A
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How to Find Your Place – 08-24-04-en

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teacher who taught farm shop at a Junior College taught by example how to live by that adage. His students learned that as they built their own shops, they should have a particular place for each tool. Work was made easier by the ease with which a particular tool could be found when required for a job to be done.

1. Do you and I have a place?

A place to live, a place to work, a place to play? The scripture before us affirms that we all have such places, and that we need such places. My place, your place, their place. For Christians that “place” is the body of Christ which is the church. If church is real and meaningful to you, but you still have not found a place in your church, let’s follow Paul’s words to the church of his day for some suggestions.

Being “in” place as a Christian is a matter of being a part of a group of people who love the Lord Jesus. Paul urged Believers to live a life worthy of the calling which they have received. And he wrote these words while himself in prison in Rome, far away from the churches of the eastern Roman Empire. Surely there must have been a fellowship of believers there in that dungeon. This clearly affirms that he is writing these words of instruction to people who had responded to the hope that is in Christ. So your place is to be found somewhere among Christians, others who have decided that the body of Christ, the church, is the place for them to be, and found a place in which to invest life.

Some will reject this idea, while trying to hold to belief in Jesus Christ. They just don’t see any need for being “in” church. Some adults feel they no longer need Bible study and may absent themselves from that part of their church life. In churches larger than home churches, there may be many opportunities for choosing to participate. It is true that no one may be able to participate in all activities of the church of which they are a part. As we think of what church is all about, we need to remember that we need to be a part of worshipping God, studying His word, fellowshiping with other believers, ministering to others and sharing the Gospel. If our participation does not allow for these elements, we are missing part of what it mean to be the church.

But the book of Ephesians is a letter sent to people who were Believers and who were part of a church in a particular place at a particular time.. They had responded to the call of God to come to him for salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. Paul recommends to them that they are to live a life worthy of their Christian calling. And everyone who becomes a Christian is responding to the call to discipleship. Your place, my place is well defined in this scripture.

Where is your place? Your place is with others who have answered the call to salvation and have accepted Jesus as Lord. They are ones Paul expected to live a life worthy of their calling and have found their place with others who are like-minded. A well functioning church is a church where there is a place for everyone.

2. What is expected of you in your place?

What is a life lived worthy of the calling.

It involves such things as complete humility, gentleness, patience, and being with one another in love.

It involves making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Scripture teaches that one's place is not some far-off place with God, but in a church trying to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Grace and Peace are the twin virtues of the Christian life Paul would pass on to all.

This is our place, and we are to keep the church united in Christ. God makes every provision we need to fulfill this responsibility.

3 How are you spiritually gifted for filling your place?

Finding your place is as simple, and as profound as finding what grace Christ has apportioned to you, what gift has been given you for the benefit of the body of Christ. All gifts are for the purpose of building up the body of Christ. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers are to help in the common good of God's people. But, you may want to say, "I haven't been given those gifts." But this is not an exhaustive list; it is only suggestive. The point is everyone who has answered the call to come to Christ has been gifted, and is therefore responsible for the others. Surely, this is part of what it means to be a Christian.

Where is your place as a Christian? After you have found a place on a job, in a community, at the table of coffee drinkers, in a service club, you may yet to find your place as a Christian. We are emphasizing that your place is in the church, and there you will find the help and encouragement to grow up and to keep the unity of the faith. Where is your place in the church? The home church encourages participation of all its members. Leading the Gathering Time, teaching the Bible Study or directing the Sharing Time is done by different people each Sunday. Home churches affirm Paul's understanding in Romans 15:14 "And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another." In this verse, Paul is speaking to people in the house churches in Rome and he affirms their ability to express goodness and share knowledge with one another."

Call to Commitment:

The Sharing Time title for today is "Finding your place". We affirm today that we have been called to minister to one another in a body of believers. That service includes prayer, teaching, aiding one another in worship, and sharing the gospel with non-believers. We each know in our minds that doing these things brings wholeness to our church. Today, we leave our time together with each of us personally committing ourselves to doing our own part in the place God has chosen for you and for me.

Concluding the Service:

Sing one or more of the songs already sung.

Blest Be The Tie, *The Worship Hymnal* #389; CCLI # 25369 Public Domain

Bind Us Together, *The Worship Hymnal* #390; CCLI #1228

We are One in the Bond of Love, *The Worship Hymnal* #387; CCLI #14459

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