

Life Group Preparation Notes:

The Big Issue - I love Jesus, but not the Church

Week1, Sunday morning, 9 July 2017

Worship: Giving thanks is the essence of worship. What one thing are you thankful for? (Not church or “spiritual”) Pray one sentence prayers around the circle starting with, Dear God, I am so thankful for...!

Check-in: What did God challenge you about from the past weekend service?

Goal for this week: To know God and to value His Bride.

Background:

Whenever we speak about the church what often pops into people’s mind is their ideas and understanding of the church, for some it’s a building, its where we go to on a Sunday, it’s where funerals, weddings and child blessings take place. It’s a place where some of our worst experiences happen. These feelings and perceptions are created when we have, at times misunderstood what the church is and who it is for.

The Church is God’s idea and God’s creation and God gave birth to it. The church is the people, the called out ones, chosen by Him who gather in local settings and then go and influence and impact the world. On Sundays we gather in rows and during the week, we gather in circles, to do life, confess to one another and to apply what we’ve heard to our daily lives so that we can go out into our work place, varsity or community.

The way we view something, is the way we will respond to it and treat it. So how do we treat or view the Bride of Christ?

Key Scripture: Genesis 28:16-18

1. The church is God’s creation. Matthew 16:18b
2. The church is precious to God. Ephesians 5:25

Scripture verses: Acts 9:5; 2 Corinthians 11:2

Group Discussion:

1. Share with the group what comes to mind when you hear the words “I love Jesus, but not the Church”?

2. We heard on Sunday that the church is God's creation - that He chose us and called us before we said "yes" to Him. Perhaps you are thinking, but I'm at church and at group - so this isn't about me, but we all need to grow in the way we relate to the Church as the Bride of Christ. If we fully believed that when we meet together on Sundays and in life groups, that we are the Bride of Christ, what would change in our actions? Consider attendance, preparation, participation, worship and attention.
3. We heard that we are precious to God. We read in Acts 9:4-5 about God's intervention with Saul and how he was stopped in his tracks. He wasn't doing right towards the "church" and God brought his life as he knew it to a halt. How does my behaviour or how I live, show evidence of the gathered Church being the Bride of Christ to those around me?
4. How does God view the church? In Ephesians 5:25-27, He asks us (not just husband and wife) to love one another like Christ loves the Church and gave up His life for her. If this is how much Jesus showed He values the Church, how does that affect your value of the Church?

Next Steps:

Between heaven and earth there is a moment... have you taken the church for granted or neglected it? Been hurt and become indifferent? Genesis 28:16-18 says "...how awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.."

Consider what needs to change in how you view the Church or where your priorities are in light of the Church being the Bride of Christ. Then share this and what your next step is with someone you have relationship with as part of accountability to grow.

Do you need to confess to someone or process your being hurt by the church people? Find a safe person/place to do this.

Others:

Watch for opportunities to show His love (practically or through kind words) to those who don't love the church because of hurt or lack of understanding this week.

Check-out and prayer time:

Take 2 minutes in silence to reflect on how you have viewed the church because of not understanding what the church is or who it's for or because you experienced hurt. Pray back to God your renewed commitment to the church and to growing in your personal relationship with Him and others.