

Life Group Preparation Notes:

The Big Issue - The Church is all about me!

Week 4, Sunday morning, 30 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: How did you take a step towards connecting with someone you didn't know this past Sunday? If you didn't, what was the barrier to you doing that?

Goal for this week: To remember that ‘we’ are the church and to be stirred to action to reach others.

Background:

Over the past 3 weeks we've looked at how and when Jesus first used the word “church”. The word “church” is from the Greek term translated “ecclesia”. And an “ecclesia” was simply a gathering or an assembly of people called out for a specific purpose.

The primary purpose of the gifts God gives us individually, and as His Church are for others.

When Jesus used the term church, his disciples understood him to be saying; “I am going to build my own assembly of people for my purposes and the foundation for this new assembly will be ME!”

The church is not where you go; the church is who you are. And if we realise that we are the church.....things begin to look a little different.

When we understand we are the church we no longer wait for the church to serve us, we begin to serve others as the church ourselves. So, contrary to some perceptions, the church is not about you, it is you.

Key Scripture: Genesis 28:16-18

1. We are the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:27.
2. We were created for a purpose. Belong. 1 Peter 4:10.
3. Jesus is the Head. Colossians 1:8

Scripture verses: 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Luke 4:8; Ephesians 2:10 (LB); 2 Corinthians 5:18 - 20; 2 Corinthians 5:11; 18 -20.

Group Discussion:

1. Have you ever uttered the words... “I didn't get anything from the worship” or “I didn't get anything from the sermon this week.” What changed in your own thinking after hearing the sermon on Sunday about the Church not being about you (or me), but that it is us?

2. Read Matthew 4:1-10. Satan challenges Jesus' call, mission and purpose. Share with the group a challenge that you are facing that draws your focus off Jesus and onto yourself, your needs, wants and desires and so we make church about us.
3. Matthew 4: 17 (NCV) it says, from that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is near." What we do next after being convicted about something by Jesus is critical. If we are "the church" then how should we respond to the call to 'follow' and 'go (find)'?
4. 2 Peter 3:9. Write down the name of one person that you are intentionally going to invite and then bring to church. Share with the group some details about who they are and ask them to commit to praying for you as you align your life to serve His purposes in their lives.
5. Share with the group one thing from each of the weeks in this series on the church that was either a 'aha' moment/revelation of who God is or a challenge to think or live differently.

Next Steps:

Do you know your gifts and passions? If you don't, or you are unsure or you have lost your passion/first love, then join us at Growth Track Step 3 on the 3rd Tuesday of every month to discover your purpose. Knowing your purpose will help you to make a difference in the lives of those you come into contact with.

Others:

Consider how you are influencing those who don't yet know nor have a relationship with Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts, words and actions this week as you commit to reaching others.

Check-out and prayer time:

Take 2 minutes in silence to reflect on what you have been reminded about being "the Church" and what God's plan and purpose is for your life. Pray back to God your commitment to being "the Bride of Christ" as you live out your daily life, to follow Jesus and find others.