

SCRIPTURES FOR 5/7/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

John 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

I Peter 1:22

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

Acts 2:46-47

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Colossians 3:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

<p>NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed</p>

LESSON 1: WHAT IS MISSING?

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

INTRODUCTION:

If you grew up in the church, you probably think “fellowship” is synonymous with “potluck.” While much fellowship may take place at a potluck, the Bible has much more to say about fellowship than, “Bring a pot to pass.”

Have someone read Acts 2:42-47.

IN THEIR HOMES

Jeff related the common complaint that if a church gets too large it becomes cold and impersonal, but this scripture puts the lie to that old saw. The church in Jerusalem went from 120 to 3,000 in one day and I would venture to guess that, based on scripture, they did community better than we do today in our church of 300.

In church growth circles, they say, “In order to get big, you must get small.” What do you think they mean by that?

Jeff shared 21 “one another” scriptures Sunday. What does that say about God’s feelings about fellowship?

AS HE HAD NEED

We need to, as Jeff said, “Get elbow deep in someone’s life.” There are many ways to do that, but the way WCC is doing it is primarily through LIFEGROUPS. Here we get an opportunity to share burdens, study the apostles’ teaching, break bread, pray, meet needs, share the gospel with new people, essentially all of the characteristics of the Acts 2 church except the “together in the temple courts” part, which we do on Sunday. In LIFEGROUPS, we can help keep each other’s feet on the ground when we are up and pick each other up when we are down. This is, I believe, what Jesus had in mind.

Do you know anyone who needs this?

Is there some way you think we could do these things even better?

THE EARLY CHURCH

We are a Restoration Movement church, which means that our founding mission was to restore today’s church to its first-century roots. Jeff shared the following three characteristics of the early church:

AUTHENTICITY

The early church was intentional and “real.”
1 Peter 1:22

ENTHUSIASM

The early church was exciting and vibrant.
Colossians 3:16

EFFECTIVENESS

The early church was magnetic and evangelistic.
Acts 2:46-47

Can we still accomplish this or is this peculiar to the first-century church?

I have heard people who, having looked at God’s blessing on Pentecost, prayed, “Lord, please do it again,” but I need to ask, “If He did it again right here in Washington, Illinois, would we know what to do about it? I believe He is doing it here, or will once we are ready to receive it. But first, we must be the church that Jeff described. We need to be the church in Washington that lives out John 13:34-35 – the one that knows what it means to love one another.

CONCLUSION

Have someone read Colossians 3:1-2.

If we were to live this way, how would it change our priorities? Would we have more time for service? Would we be so busy? Would we be discipling a brother or sister or leading a family Bible study? How would it change our outlook?

Meditate on that this week. Set your heart on things above and we will return to talk about slowing down and simplifying our lives.