

SCRIPTURES FOR 5/14/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Matthew 6:31-33

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Ephesians 4:11-12

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

1 Peter 2:4-5

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

John 17:20-21

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

1 Peter 5:2-4

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

John 13:35

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

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



LESSON 2: FIRST THINGS FIRST

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

INTRODUCTION:

This week, Ed talked about “real fellowship” and how it is more complicated and deeper than just getting together

REAL FELLOWSHIP IS A LOST ART

Have you ever lived in a neighborhood that really knew how to do fellowship? If so, what was it like?

Ed mentioned that he didn’t believe potlucks, Bible studies, and Sunday school classes were the best way to achieve “real fellowship.”

Have you ever experienced an exception to this rule? Explain.

If you didn’t grow up in this exact church and you are not on staff here, what made you decide to stay here and not check out other churches?

What uniquely qualifies the church regain the lost art of real fellowship?

REAL FELLOWSHIP IS HARD

In our terribly messed up world, where “normal” people are more and more rare, and “broken families” are becoming the norm, where constant vigilance is required to keep our kids from becoming polluted and turned from the church, fellowship is perhaps more difficult than ever but also twice as important.

In what way does “real fellowship” help us in this cultural meltdown? How has it helped you?

If loving our neighbors as ourselves means providing for their needs, what can we do to accomplish this in our LIFEGROUP? In our neighborhood? In our community?

Have someone read Matthew 6:31-33.

Ed suggested that we are expected to accomplish the ministry of the church through fellowship and if

we seek first the kingdom of God, we as a church, will set it as a priority.

Do you agree? Why or why not?

Have someone read Ephesians 4:11-12, & 1Peter 2:4-5.

When thinking of what we are called to do in this scripture, does it scare or excite you?

Do you think it is crazy to suggest that “laypeople” can be trusted with this kind of ministry?

REAL FELLOWSHIP IS WORTH IT

Ed suggests that even though it is tough, real fellowship is worthwhile and “doable” because the author of Christian community is the Creator of the universe. Romans 8:31 asks, “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Have someone read John 17:20-21.

What do you think Jesus means here? Do you think this is an attainable goal?

Obviously, we can seek this unity in LIFEGROUPS, but what are other ways that Christians can seek this kind of unity?

Have someone read 1 Peter 5:2-4.

If you feel like you couldn’t have someone entrusted to you, think about children. If you have children, God has entrusted them to your care. We will most likely be entrusted one day with shepherding someone. We should not be frightened by this. This is why He made us. He uses people just like you. Depending on your situation, you may be being called to shepherd someone else or to seek someone to shepherd you right now. Do not ignore this. Act.

CONCLUSION

Have someone read John 13:35.

The church in general and our church specifically need to make fellowship a priority. Decide today to make it permanently a “big rock” in your life so the world can see how well we love.