

## Discussion Groups

### Are You Ready To Go? - Week 2

#### Getting to Know Me (5-10 minutes)

*(These questions are designed to help break the ice and should be answered by each person)*

1. Since this is the first time groups are meeting, have each person share:
  - a. their name
  - b. their most favorite place to worship God (having a meeting with God in a respectful way)

**Recite Mission Statement:** *Have everyone recite the church's mission statement...* "Equipping Followers of Jesus to be Disciple-makers"

#### Prayer (5-10 minutes)

Open this time for people to share prayer requests prior to praying.

#### Making A Connection (10-15 minutes)

*(This set of questions is designed to help individuals further process the message. As individuals share, different parts of the message will be reviewed allowing additional points to be brought to forefront of each person's mind.*

*Additionally, the process of sharing through these questions will provide a time of testimony because individuals will be able to share how the Spirit is communicating to him/her. This alone will help to provide more meaningful conversations among the people in the group and nurture a feeling of connectedness and belonging. Try to encourage every person to share for each question. It is important to remember that silence is ok...especially during the first few weeks! People may need 15-20 seconds to process the question and overcome the uneasiness of perhaps not knowing everyone. The beauty behind these questions is that there is no right or wrong answer, which should help you to be able to encourage each person to share.*

*Tip: When it is quiet and no one has spoken up, it is ok to address someone by name. For example: "John, Do you have one principle from today's message that you would like to share?"*

#### Getting Started:

1. If you had to give a shortened version of last Sunday's message in 3-4 sentences, what would you say?
2. As you have pondered the definition of worship and reviewed the Scripture passages about worship, how did you approach today's service differently?

#### Sharing Testimony:

3. Share one "aha!" moment from today's message.
4. How did today's message challenge the way you have typically viewed or approached Sunday morning's time of worship?
5. If you diligently apply the message, how should it effect the way we engage in relationships with others inside the church?

#### Digging Deeper (15-20 minutes)

*(This set of questions is designed to move participants into searching and reading the Scriptures of God.)*

##### Review from last week

- a. Review the definition of worship: Meeting with God in a way that He says is respectful. Say: *We can have a meeting with God that is disrespectful but this technically is not worship. We can sing songs of praise with our lips, but have hearts that far from God – so the time of song is not really worship. We can read the Word of God, but if we read it so fast, not remembering or allowing the Spirit of God to show us how to apply it, then the act of reading the Word is not worship. We can attend a church service, but if we attend for the purpose of socializing, then the act of coming to church is not worship, etc.*

- b. Read Romans 12:1-2. Worship is something that we need to do as individuals. (*present your bodies as a living sacrifice. this is your spiritual worship-Romans 12*) And it is through worship that we are molded into His image (*Romans 12:2...be transformed...you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*)

### **A Deeper Look at Today's Message**

*Say: As we begin to take a deeper look at today's message, we need to start at the beginning. In Genesis 1 and 2, God creates the world and humans, who are made in His image. In Genesis 3, the humans mess the whole thing up by their disobedience to God's command regarding the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This results in a curse upon all the earth. This curse continues for generations, through Noah and the flood, to Abraham. Let's look at Genesis 12:1-3*

1. Read Genesis 12:1-3 – what are some repeated words in this passage? How is God planning on overcoming the curse upon humanity from this passage?
  - a. *Repeated words – blessing, bless, (This is important because it is the opposite of the curse in Genesis 3)*
  - b. *God's plan to overcome the curse upon humanity in Genesis 3 - The plan is to create a nation out of Abraham. Through Abraham's descendents all the families of the earth shall be blessed. It is not Abraham that overcomes the curse but Abraham's family. It is dependent upon a group of people that God is going to create.*

*Say: Let's keep going in the Biblical story! Abraham's descendents land in slavery in Egypt. There is a major bump in the road here. How can a group of slaves be the group of people that God is going to use to bless the entire world? He starts by rescuing them out of slavery. Let's check out what He does next.*

2. Read Exodus 19:4-6. What is God communicating to the Israelites in this passage?
  - a. *If these people come to me and are taught by me, and listen to me and are instructed by me, then you will be mine. You will be my treasure. Please note the stipulation upon the Israelites – **they must obey God's voice and keep His covenant.** In other words, God is continuing His plan to create a group of people. Through their unique living He will bless the entire world. This people are the Jews. \*\*\*In order to hear God's voice, you need to have a meeting with God (worship)*
3. What is the overarching theme of God's plan in the Scriptures? Read Exodus 6:7, Leviticus 26:12, Jeremiah 30:22, Ezekiel 36:27-28, Zechariah 8:8, 2 Corinthians 6:16, Hebrews 8:10, Revelation 21:3
  - a. *God starts to use a specific phrase in Exodus that gets repeated throughout the rest of the Scriptures to tell people about His plan to create a unique people through which the entire world will be blessed."They shall be my people. I will be their God"*
4. By the New Testament passages included here, the Church is now being referenced as this unique people through whom all the people of the world will be blessed. What instructions has Jesus given us that are supposed to make us a unique people today?
  - a. *Here are a few from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.*
    - i. *5:13-16 → Have an impact on the world by reflecting Jesus*
    - ii. *5:19 Hold fast to the teachings of the Scripture*
    - iii. *5:22 → Whole relationships with others are required. God wants us to be right in our relationships with others before we come to Him presenting gifts.*
    - iv. *5:25 – Do not be stubborn, rather work out disagreements without needing to go before a mediator.*
    - v. *5:28 – Be free of lust*
    - vi. *5:32 – We do not divorce (except for sexual immorality)*
    - vii. *5:43-46 – Love your enemies*
    - viii. *5:47 – Be welcoming; greet everyone, not just those you "like" or "know"*
    - ix. *6:1-8 – Do not draw attention to yourself for the "spiritual" things you do*
    - x. *6:22 -23 – Refrain from ungodly events, media (television, movies, books, music, etc.)*
    - xi. *7:1-5 – Do not have double standards, making excuses for your own bad behavior but judging others for their behaviors.*

5. What other characteristics can you think of that Scripture reveals about the way Christian people should be different than a people that is not Christian?
  - a. *All answers need to be provided with a Scripture to support it. If there is no connection to Scripture, ask, "What passage supports that characteristic?" It is very easy for "Christians" to create their own criteria because it makes them feel more safe/secure. However, these extra criteria may actually contradict the true character of God so we need to check everything against Scripture.*
  
6. Read Acts 2:42-47 With these verses in mind, how does coming together to worship help us to be this unique people? What were the people doing together?
  - a. *The people gather for the fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers. Through this worship – God refined them to the point where they were all in submission to Him and therefore have all things in common. They were in agreement, on the same page. As a result, the power of God was able to move in many wonders and signs being done through the apostles. As a result, more people were coming to faith in Christ.*
  - b. Fellowship is Koinonia in Greek which is best translated "the intimate bond of fellowship which unites Christians, absolutely". This term scripturally has a much deeper intimate bond than the way we think of fellowship today. According to the scriptural meaning of fellowship, what types of "fellowship" activities in our church today are really koinonia fellowship, which is listed in Acts 2? What activities are not really fellowship, but we think they are "fellowship"?
  
7. Remembering our definition of worship (meeting with God in a respectful way), how do we worship together? *We need to be honest with ourselves and each other, we come together in unity – having one heart and one mind moving in the same direction, submission to the leadership of God, placing down our own desires and interests in order to work in harmony with the Lord's leading, we come for the purpose of being identified and molded into God's people rather than coming to socialize, or have emotional needs met through singing, seeing friends, etc. This is not so much about singing or praying as much as it is about coming before God whole-heartedly, honestly and in unity of the Lord. Remember David dancing before the Lord with ALL HIS MIGHT in last week's sermon.*

### **Application** (5-7 minutes)

*(These questions are more self-revealing and should only be answered by those who are willing to share. Do not address anyone specifically to share. As the group becomes more comfortable with each other, more individuals might be willing to share.)*

1. What stops us/you from coming before God together whole-heartedly, honestly and in unity during our worship gatherings?
2. How would our worship gatherings be different if ALL OF US came before God whole-heartedly, honestly and in unity?

### **Understanding the Big Picture**

Use the following passages to summarize God's plan throughout the Scriptures.

Genesis 12:1-3

Exodus 19:4-6

Exodus 6:7

Leviticus 26:12

Jeremiah 30:22

Ezekiel 36:27-28

Zechariah 8:8

2 Corinthians 6:16

Hebrews 8:10

Revelation 21:3

### **How are God's people to look different from the rest of the World?**

Matthew 5-7.

Other passages:

### **How does worshipping together help make us a unique people?**

Read Acts 2:42-47

### **Application**

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