

November 22/23, 2008

“Following Like Jesus...”

Pastor Mark Burch

The hallmark of our Christian faith is that we ***actually live it out!*** “Our faith” is to be more than just an intellectual knowledge or an emotional experience but it is to have practical and powerful impact on our daily lives!

As we speak of Jesus “incarnation” it becomes clearly apparent that in order to achieve what He achieved, He had to have absolute TRUST in the plan of the Father! The classic “struggle” was when He faced His impending death, and cries out in the garden of Gethsemane *“not my will but Your will be done.”* Those four words might summarize the entirety of our commitment to Jesus Christ – ***“Your will be done.”***

So here is the rub....why do we find it so difficult to release control of our lives into the loving hands of Jesus? Why is “following” often such a struggle for us? What is it that keeps us from this deep, abiding contentment of taking our hands off and surrendering 100% to Him?

Following the Father’s plan took Jesus to the cross! Are we prepared to “lay it all on the line” in order to follow Him today?

– Pastor Mark

HOME GROUP Discussion Questions

Again – in this 3-week series we’re turning your discussion time around; instead of responding to the message you heard on the weekend, you are going to discuss in advance, the topic for the coming weekend. As we head toward Advent, we’re seeking to flesh out (incarnate) our mission statement. How can we actually live out the values of Jesus in our world today?!

Open It (Making it Personal)

1. Describe a time in your life when you received extraordinary hospitality – what was it and how did it make you feel?

Describe a time in your life when you experienced a gross lack of hospitality – how did it make you feel?

Think It

2. How has individualism affected the practice of hospitality both corporately and individually?

3. What do you think is the difference between hospitality and entertaining?

4. Do you think hospitality is something that should only be practiced by those who have the gift for it?

5. Why is the service of hospitality so important in our day?

6. How does the practice of hospitality help a society marked by fear, loneliness, and revenge?

7. Thumb through the Gospels and note how many times Jesus is sharing a meal with people and how often significant things happen around the table – why do you think the dinner table or the coffee shop plays such an important role in our serving and reaching out to others?

Dig Into It (Looking into the Bible)

8. Gen.18.1-8 – Why do you think the practice of hospitality would have been so important in a nomadic culture?

• Lk 14.12-14 – What does this passage tell us about hospitality? What is Jesus challenging us with here?

• Why is ‘loving our enemy’ the ultimate example of hospitality?

• Matthew 25.31-46 – What does this passage say to us about the service of hospitality?

• Galatians 6.10

• Romans 12.9-14 – What role should hospitality play in the Christian life?

• 1 Pt.4.9

• Hebrews 13.1-2

9. How is the communion table an example of God’s hospitality towards us?

10. Why is Jesus’ death the ultimate example of God’s hospitality towards us?

Apply It (Application)

11. We Serve the world like Jesus when we make ourselves available to everyone in it So here’s a challenge for your small group – challenge each other (and be accountable to one another) to have someone (or a couple) who is not a follower of Jesus (i.e. a neighbor, colleague, etc) over to your house for supper or dessert.

• Invite someone from your church whom you do not know over to your house for lunch or dinner

• Would you commit to making yourself more open to the unexpected knock or phone call at an inconvenient time?

• Would you commit to begin reaching out to others in your church whom you do not know? Next Sunday when you see a person you do not know imagine that person was Christ himself.

Just 2 weeks till Living Nativity!