

LIFE GROUP STUDIES

These studies / discussions are based around the message that Phil Pye preached about being a 'flagship' church. He based the teaching around the church in Antioch.

These studies can be done in any order.

STUDY 1 - What did the church in Antioch look like?

Read together ACTS 11:19-30 and ACTS 13:1-3

What were the main features of the church in Antioch?

Simply go round the group finding out as many as possible from these passages.

Then it would be good to spend a bit of time praying for those involved in leading these things at St Paul's

Examples:

Generosity - pray for the Trustees for wisdom as they handle the challenges of finance and legalities (Rob Swallow, John Turner, Peter Pickering, David Warren)

Worship - whilst we all have a responsibility to worship it's good to pray for the worship team

Mission or outreach - pray for the City Care team and the groups. But make sure we understand that we are all responsible and we don't just leave it all to City Care.

(If you are not sure what to pray for them, give the relevant team leader a call and ask them what they would like you to pray for - this would be enormously encouraging).

IDEA - perhaps your Life Group could adopt a specific team / ministry to support and pray for regularly - e.g. Kingdom Kids / Fusion Youth / City care / Silver liners - get regular updates from the leadership teams and pray for them and encourage the team in as many ways as you can.

STUDY 2 - BEING A DISCIPLE

ACTS 11:26 it was at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

Disciple = one who learns

Why might we need to use the idea of 'discipleship' more than 'Christian' in today's culture?

Thought - some would say that the term 'Christian' has become so watered down that we need to recover the idea of being a disciple of Jesus.

A good example of a disciple in Antioch is Barnabas. There are a number of verses in the Bible that help us build a picture of Barnabas.

Give members of your group a verse or passage to read and ask the question:-

'What does this verse or passage tell us about Barnabas?'

Build up a character profile of this man.

Acts 4:36

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 14:14

Acts 9:27

Galatians 2:1-13

1 Corinthians 9:6

Colossians 4:10

Acts 11:19-30

Acts 14:21-28

What parts of the character of Barnabas challenge you most of all?

How can we help one another to become more like Barnabas? A clue might be in the meaning of his name, given to him by the apostles - 'son of encouragement'

Is encouragement always saying nice things? Sometimes, we need to be challenged.

STUDY 3 - JUDE AND DISCIPLESHIP

In many ways, this little letter contains some ideas that are difficult to understand. Our aim today is not to try and understand these bits but look at a few key verses that I think will help us and challenge us to be good disciples.

INTRODUCE THE LITTLE LETTER

Written in a context where there was teaching going around that the grace of God was so free that you could act in whatever way you wished and God would forgive you and all would be ok. It is called 'license' to do anything! Some call it 'cheap grace.'

As a result, some early Christians were living immoral lives whilst claiming to be followers of Jesus. This was and is not what being a disciple means.

Now read the whole letter. Perhaps do it from two different versions as this helps us get the picture.

We are going to look at v20-23 - this is a great 'job description' of a disciple.

SOME QUESTIONS THAT YOU CAN USE TO HELP LAUNCH DISCUSSION

1. Whose responsibility is discipleship?

Clue - 'build yourselves up...'

2. How can we build ourselves up?

There are a couple of ideas in this passage but there are others.

3. Why is the church important to this?

Ephesians 4:11 talks about a variety of gifted people that are there to 'equip' us for 'works of service.'

4. The passage urges us to 'keep ourselves in God's love.'

What do you think this means?

What sort of things pull us away from God's love?

5. Be merciful - part of being a disciple is to be merciful. Mercy = demonstrating compassion and forgiveness even when it is undeserved. God has been merciful to us. This quality of discipleship is especially important in a church or team setting. Why do we find it so difficult to forgive?

IDEA:- It might be good to share communion together as this reminds us so vividly of the mercy Jesus has shown to each one of us.

6. v23 is quite a difficult verse to understand. Read it again and try to think of how this is relevant in today's culture. How can we 'snatch people from the fire?' Don't forget this is talking about Christians not unchurched folks!

What do you think 'mercy mixed with fear' might mean?

Clue - might be that there is a right fear of God that holiness demands or expects.

Perhaps we can forget that sometimes discipleship is serious and we cannot just let people do whatever they want without a challenge or a rebuke?