

LIVING ON PURPOSE: EVANGELISM

Our congregation continues to seek involvement in the community through home groups. We encourage each home group to plan and carry out an activity of Christian kindness directed toward an individual or a group in our community.

Spend some time brain storming where your group might get involved. What have you done before? What works well? What doesn't? Can you build on a previous activity or do you want to try something new? What have you heard that other groups have done?

Next week begin to put a plan together.

CLOSING:

Please confirm when and where you will meet next time.
See who else can bring some snacks.

Who else should be invited to your group?

Share in a time of prayer.

Drenched in the Divine Perspective

St. Luke Lutheran Church
Winter, 2008
Home Group Discussion #1

Ready for a plunge?

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:9 (NIV)

This four part study is designed to do two things.

First, it will challenge us to get more aggressive with four key spiritual disciplines: Scripture reading, prayer, giving and evangelism. The more we plunge into these disciplines, the more we will see life like God does!

Second, the study will continue to focus our congregational life on five key purposes:

Worship: live to please God

Fellowship: be connected into God's family

Discipleship: become like Jesus

Ministry: serve others

Evangelism: share Jesus

OPENING:

Make sure everyone knows one another. Share a great experience that you had during the Christmas holiday. Share something you liked about a holiday worship service. Share something you liked about a gathering of family or friends.

As you begin this session have someone lead the group in **prayer asking God's blessings** on those present.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES?

Over the next four weeks we are going to consider four specific spiritual disciplines. By developing these disciplines we will become more like Jesus and gain a more God-like perspective on life.

What do you know about spiritual disciplines?

Remember “discipline” is not the same as “punishment.” Discipline and punishment are two different concepts. (In the training of a four year old it may be difficult to tell the difference!) Punishment focuses on paying someone back for a wrong. Discipline focuses on teaching or training. The root word in discipline is “teaching.” The word “disciple” comes from that same root and means student.

Spiritual disciplines train us to live as students of Jesus. They can be divided into **disciplines of abstinence** (refraining from activities) and **disciplines of engagement** (participating in activities).

Dallas Willard, a writer on spiritual disciplines, gives the following lists:

Disciplines of Abstinence: solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, secrecy, sacrifice

Disciplines of Engagement: study, worship, celebration, service, prayer, fellowship, confession, submission

Spend some time talking about these. Which are familiar? Are there some that you practice?

READY TO FLOOD YOUR LIFE?

The first discipline for our consideration will be “study.” Specifically, we will consider “aggressive Bible reading.”

Spend some time talking about your Bible reading habits. What works? What doesn't? What have you experienced when you have done readings in the Bible? Do you have a specific plan for Bible reading?

Read and discuss the following passages: John 8:31-32, Colossians 3:16 and Acts 17:10-12. What does it mean to *continue*? What does *richly mean*? Are we *eager to examine*?

Read and discuss John 5:39-40, John 20:30-31 and II Timothy 3:14-17. **What if these passages are really true?**

The reading of God's word is never an esoteric or impractical exercise in spirituality. The word of God is powerful and protective. Read Isaiah 55:8-11 and Ephesians 6:10-18 (notice how the sword of the Spirit is the only offensive weapon). **What if these passages are really true?**

How does your discussion change your understanding of reading the Bible? What would “aggressive Bible reading” look like in your life? Many Christian leaders recommend reading through the Bible annually. What would that take?

Remember, the Pharisees loved to study the Scriptures. They became arrogant self-righteous. What will keep our reading of the Bible from turning us into Pharisees?