

THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS

Community Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's Word. (Rom. 8:29, Heb. 10:24-25). Here's how it will happen.

SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions." But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms, such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.

SERVE

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.



FROM JOHN'S GOSPEL
Message #30
John 15:1-27

Rev. Bill Impey
Grace ...a community church
March 1, 2009

Vine & Branches

GOD THE FATHER

John 15:1-3, Isaiah 5, Galatians 5:22-23

Removes fruitless branches

Prunes back fruit bearing branches

WHAT IS THE FRUIT THAT GOD IS EXPECTING FROM US?

John 15:4-8, Isaiah 5, Galatians 5:22-23

Christ likeness - His character reproduced in us
Our part is to remain in Him (4-5)

THE GIFT OF HIS LOVE

John 15:9-17, Jude 1:21a

Love is a decision

A decision to benefit someone else - regardless of how I feel about them

What does loving someone like this look like?

see John 15:13

THE HOSTILITY OF THE WORLD

John 15:18-27, 1 Pet 4:3-4

Society constantly pressures us to conform

The cause of the world's hatred - godlessness

How should we respond to the hatred of the world?

Next week: "Holy Spirit" John 16

Community Group Homework

For the week of March 1, 2009

Welcome to the Winter pre-launch of Community Groups!

This week we begin our 3 week Community Groups “pre-launch.” To prepare for this week’s meeting, take some time to focus on the questions below and be prepared to share your answers with the group. Have a great first meeting as you come together to connect and encourage one another to grow and to see God change our lives from the inside out!

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Daylight Saving Time begins next Sunday; so set your clocks ahead one hour before you got to bed on Saturday. What do you think about Daylight Saving Time?
2. What’s one reason you decided to join a Community Group?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Looking back over your sermon notes, which particular point or passage of Scripture most challenged, confused or caught your attention?
2. In John 15:1-11 Jesus talks about the vine, the gardener and the branches.
 - Why did Jesus call himself the *true vine*?
 - Why does He call His disciples *branches*?
 - Have you ever experienced the Father’s “pruning”?

3. In a crowded mall a mother tells her child, “*Hold my hand and stay close to me. We won’t get separated if we hold on to each other.*”

Why did Jesus tell His disciples to “*remain in my love*” instead of commanding them to bear fruit?

4. Because of time, Pastor Bill skimmed over verses 18-27. Keeping them in mind, read 1 Peter 4:3-4. Have you ever experienced the world’s hatred?
5. In vs. 12 Jesus said to “*Love each other as I have loved you.*” What practical ways can we do that? (see verse 13)

TAKING IT HOME

Read Galatians 5:22-23 - The fruit that God expects in us comes in 9 godly qualities, gathered in one great cluster. What quality(s) do you seem to be lacking?

There are 3 categories of branches described in this passage—those bearing no fruit, those bearing some fruit, and those bearing much fruit. In which category would you place yourself and why?

If you are not bearing much fruit, what is Jesus’ counsel to you in these verses?