

“A community of one mind” – Philippians 2:1-11

Starter

As we continue to build community with our Life Groups, please feel free to build relationship with each other by catching up and/or playing a quick game. Make sure that any new members of your group feel especially welcomed in.

Introduction

Oxford Languages’ definition of community is:

1. a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
2. the condition of sharing or having certain attitudes and interests in common.

So to be part of the community of Life Church Southampton, it is best for us to be near each other, and as Paul puts it in Philippians 2:2, be “of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (ESV).

What are the “particular characteristics in common” that members of Life Church Southampton have? – We should have a shared vision to bring us together as a community. Chris illustrated on Sunday that Vision + Vision = Division. Division is literally to force apart/separate, although the pun of di (two) -vision is tempting to make!

Digging In

Read Philippians 2:1-11 together. Does anything stand out to you from this passage?

On Sunday Chris drew out three examples of Jesus from this passage. As Jesus is our model, we should always be looking to be more in the likeness of Christ. **Discuss the following questions for each example.**

- a) What attributes does Jesus demonstrate?
- b) How can we do this more in our lives?
- c) What would our church look like if we all did this more?

1. v6 – “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped”.

We don’t cling to position; we care about people.

2. v7 – he “emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men”.

We don’t cling to badges and labels, we serve God, and we serve others.

3. v8 - “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”.

We see that our sufferings are light and momentary and learn to walk in humble obedience – even to death.

Chris then explored the ways in which Paul points to how we can live more in the likeness of Christ. **Read Philippians 1:27 – 2:4.** Paul precedes this passage by exhorting the Philippians to “let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ”, but that “for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake”. Paul wants to offer advice on how to live a Godly life and persevere through trials.

1. “In Christ” (v1) – become a Christian! **What are the ways in which we mark that we are part of the Christian faith and part of the Christian body? Baptism and communion! How do these help us to know we are part of community?**
2. “participation in the Spirit” (v2) – When we allow Him, God’s Spirit fills us and helps us to have the mind of Christ and be united in purpose with Him and united with His people. **How can we get more of the Spirit’s encouragement for this? Pray!**
3. “in full accord” (v2) – Be in agreement with God. **Does anyone remember what Chris said about when we are in disagreement with God? “Guess who’s wrong!”**
4. “of one mind” (v3) This is not a command to be all the same, to have exactly the same thoughts as each other, but to all be going in the same direction. **Read 1 Cor 12:1-26. What does this have to say about the importance of all being different and the dangers of all being the same?** Remember that as a church we all have the same purpose (Mat 22:35-40) and the same mission (Mat 28:19-20).
5. “do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit” (v3) – Paul knows that some in the church in Philippi have confidence in themselves as individuals (see 2:3-4, Paul would only need to write this if it was needed to be heard by the church), when they need to have humility towards each other. **What happens to our interactions with each other if we do not have humility?** We can see our own needs as greater than those of each other, or believe we are better than each other, leading to pride.

6. “Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others” (v4) – caring about each other and investing emotionally in each other is the essence of community. **How do you feel when it is obvious that someone else has taken an interest in your life and makes a positive comment? How can we do this more for others?**

Growing together

From working through this passage in *Philippians*, **what practices make a good, strong, healthy Christian community?** Discuss practical ways by which your own group can deepen its life together as a community.

Reflect: In which areas that we’ve discussed, **where do you personally and as a group, tend to be the weakest, why might that be? What practical steps could we take to improve?**

Pray together as a group:

- *For ourselves. Pray that we can be humble towards each other, always putting the responsibilities we have towards each other before the rights we expect.*
- *For how this expression of community can effectively share the Gospel of Christ. Pray that we can take up Chris’ challenge of doing one thing for the community and one thing for someone in the church.*
- *For our city and wider community – that our love for others would reflect Jesus’s love and shine out as different and take hold in people’s hearts.*
- *Pray again for Alpha. We want to demonstrate how our community reflects God and make His name known.*