

REFLECTIONS - Part 4

Scripture used: Galatians 5:25 and Acts 2:43-46 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

We have focused on how the Spirit transforms our individual lives through atonement & freedom from fear. Now we consider how the Spirit works through family (intimate groups) and community (large groups). Paul uses the examples of shared meals, worshipping together, and hosting each other to help us understand what it means to follow Jesus. By finding our place in our own families, by mentoring and friendship, by contributing to a small group - we grow individually and together. [We call our small groups "life groups" as they are truly meant to "do life" together.] No matter what our context, the Bible teaches us that **people** matter most - not achievement, money, power, etc. Even if relationships are sometimes messy, and sometimes inconvenient and require effort, it is our choice to prioritize people and relationships that makes us fully human and allows us to convey the heart of God.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **The expression "Body of Christ" means that we are members together of the church, and each one of us has gifts that are essential for the good of the whole community.** Pastor Hurmon used a true story of a Vietnam veteran who recently began to come to NBCC and joined one of our life groups. The man's heart has been filled, and his horizons have expanded dramatically as a result. We must tap the energy of young people & the wisdom of senior folks in our church. Each one of us can make a difference in the lives of others within our community and outside of our community; are we utilizing the gifts that God has given us to make a difference in His kingdom?
- 2) **Life Groups allow us to share in humility and with honesty.** In the safe space of Christian community and small groups, we are able to share thoughts, flaws, struggles, and pressures. And, we are able to share our uniqueness and our stories, and in the diversity of backgrounds and experiences that God has given to us, we gain a deeper and fuller appreciation of who God is ([Romans 14:1, MSG](#)).
- 3) **Trusted Christian friendships allow us to confess our mistakes and sins and receive healing.** Struggling with doubt and sin is not being hypocrite - it is acknowledgeing the Spirit makes room for sinners and gives redemption ([Galatians 6:1-3, MSG](#)) While God can forgive us when we confess to God, [James 5:16-18, MSG](#) makes it clear that it often when we confess to one another that the work of healing begins in our lives.
- 4) **Life Groups are a place where we can rejoice together and mourn together ([Romans 12:15, NIV](#))** We rejoice together when good things happen in our lives. Even more importantly, we can suffer together in personal crises (health, separation & divorce, work). We process chaotic and scary world events and care for each other through the turmoil. In our Gatherings, we took time to pray for the many, many women (and men as well) who have suffered from sexual abuse and violence. Every person who is wounded or traumatized needs a safe space to receive grace and to experience God's radical love and acceptance. While that may not be an entire Life Group, small group communities offer friendships and relationships that can provide that level of safety.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Where do you fit in the Body of Christ at NBCC? Do you experience belonging? Do you have a sense that your place in the Body is essential? How do you pray, do, and serve with others?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - This message was all about the power and promise of Christian community. How do you feel like your Life Group experience compares with the potential and purpose of Christian community in Scripture? If you've experienced God's goodness through community in specific ways, identify them and give thanks for it! If you feel like your experience has fallen short in specific ways, be honest with these as well. Discuss as a Life Group how to continue to grow towards God's purposes for Christian community and friendship.

- 3) **DO** - Relationships take initiative. Is there one thing you can do to go deeper in relationship with a friend (or potential friend) at NBCC or in your Life Group? Figure out what you need to do to take that step to be proactive and reach out!