

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: April 23rd 2017

Speaker: David Lawrence

Title: Leading for Growth

Introduction: This passage reveals how the Apostles dealt with the first threat of division within the church. The problem and potential rift caused by the unfair distribution of bread to the Greek-speaking widows in the church, could not be allowed to fester: action needed to be taken.

Review: Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review.

Read: Acts 6:1-7

Reflect:

1. What are the causes of the unhappiness in the church in the passage? Why is this such an important issue for the sake of the church's mission? (see Matthew 5:16; John 13:34,35; James 1:27; 1 John 4:9-12 (espec 11,12)).

- What similar 'fall outs' could spoil the church's testimony to God's love today? How can we guard against them?

2. Why do you think the Apostles chose NOT to respond to this need themselves (e.g. by taking on the responsibility for the bread distribution)? (see vs3,4).

- What would have been the result, had they decided that as the church's leaders, they should meet this need themselves?
- Is there anyone in the group who is facing a difficult decision, maybe related to the expectation of meeting other people's needs? If so, let them share and then pray for them.

3. The Apostles way of meeting the need, involved including the whole church in the decision-making process (see 5-6). What do you think the effect of this approach would have been, for the people in the church?

- At TBC (and in all Baptist Churches) we favour this 'congregational' approach to decision-making. Rather than leaders making all the decisions and telling the church what they have decided, the leaders draw the church into discussion and decision-making, particularly focused on our Family Forum meetings.
 - What is people's experience of being in a church that operates like this? How does it differ from the way that other churches they have been in operated?
 - What are the advantages and dis-advantages?

Leaders: feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes.

Don't feel you have to use all of the material, but
do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect – Respond
and DO make room for the 'And Finally' questions!

Thornbury Baptist Church:

Following the Way of Jesus: Loving God - Loving One Another - Loving Neighbour & World

4. Christian leaders should lead differently. Read Mark 10:35-45. What are the similarities and differences between contemporary understandings of 'leadership' and the approach that Jesus describes in the passage?

- Spend some time considering Jesus' teaching on leadership and consider how it could be applied in the following settings. Try to think of 3 specific 'rules' for applying Jesus' teaching to each situation:
 - by parents in the home
 - by group members in their places of work?
 - by a children's group leader or home-group leader in the church?
 - by the elders of the church?

6. What was the result of the church ordering its internal life correctly, and of the Apostles being released to preach and pray (v7)?

- Spend some time in prayer. Pray for healthy relationships within the church and pray for the church's leaders. Above all pray that "the word of God would spread... and the number of disciples in Thornbury would increase rapidly"!

And finally:

As you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

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