

Small Groups @ TBC - Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: 20 November 2016

Speaker: Mike Levy

Title: Encounter - Preparing

Introduction: Concluding our series on Encounter

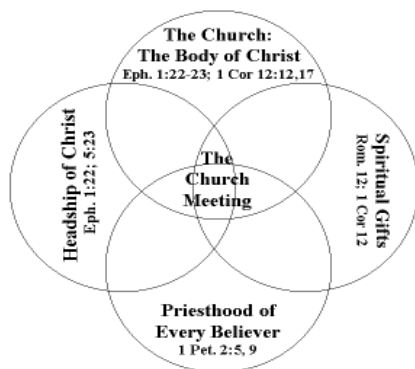
Read: Acts 2 vs 42 to 47, Hebrews 10 vs 19 to 25

Review:

Reading these passages, and others in the NT, you get the sense that meeting together was essential for Christian life and growth and that such meetings were vibrant, dynamic and joyful. Acts 2 speaks of people filled with awe and of signs and wonders and of an impact on frontline as people sold all they had, held things in common and gave to those in need. But even in the NT some had stopped meeting together and in Hebrews 10 there was an appeal to get back to meeting together.

In our series on Encounter we have deliberately set out to heighten the sense of expectation and anticipation that when we gather we gather to engage with God who is present by his holy spirit. This carries with it ideas such as moving from a people who consume to a people who contribute, from a people who receive to a people who respond to what God is doing.

When we look at some of the key principles of NT church we can see that they converge at the point of meeting as church.



The purpose of Spiritual Gifts is to build up the whole body.

The headship of Christ is manifested through his leading of the meeting of church through his holy spirit,

The priesthood of every believer is demonstrated as we minister to each other and share communion.

At the meeting of church, we gather together as the body of Christ.

So, if meeting as church is so important, shouldn't we prepare for it?

The danger is that we can prepare as 'workers' whether on worship team, speaking, welcoming, hosting leading Sunday morning groups etc. our mind can be filled with logistics, plans, timetables, preparing becomes a matter of what we need to do rather than an excitement for how God might meet us. At times, we can prepare as 'spectators' we come to watch not to take part. We come with the attitude that everyone else needs to make sure we have a good time, that the songs are played in the

Thornbury Baptist: Loving God - Loving One Another - Loving Neighbour & World

way we like, that the talk is sufficiently witty and entertaining and leaves us warm inside etc.

Hints and tips for preparing for an encounter with God at meetings of church:

Attitude: Come not as a worker or a spectator but with an attitude that this is a time and place to encounter God, to receive (Exodus 19-20), respond (Isaiah 6 v 8) and edify (1 Cor 14 v 26).

Treat it as part of the whole: As special as meeting of church is it is part of whole life, so stay close to God all week, have times of family worship, your own times of prayer and reflection etc. God may well speak to you about when we next meet.

Read the passages: Each week we publish the topic and readings for the following Sunday, read them in the week, pray them through, meditate on them and ask God what he may want to say to you, and church, through them.

Pray for the meeting: Ask God to be present, to reveal himself to us. pray for the speaker, worship team, Sunday morning group leaders etc., ask God to recall people he may want you to speak with when we meet.

Look after our spiritual health: Follow David's example in Psalm 139 and ask God to search us and know our heart.

Do the practical stuff: Plan your Saturday night with Sunday morning in mind, set your alarm in good time so you can arrive at Church on time and refreshed, focus your mind on meeting with God, maybe have a media free Sunday morning and when you walk through the doors of the building save business to coffee time.

Reflect and Respond:

1. What have been the highlights of the Encounter series to you?
2. What impact has the series had on you and your expectations and attitudes?
3. Discuss the idea that the principles of NT church converge at the point of the meeting of Church?
4. Share experiences of preparing for meeting of church.
5. Share your own hints and tips about how to prepare.
6. What, if anything, will you change because of this series?
7. What, if anything, should the church change because of this series - and who will you discuss this with?

Pray: Let your prayers be led by what comes out of your reflection.