



MANIFESTO – Week 3

The Main Concept – Romans 1:8-15

Pray as you begin your group. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your group through God's Word and through each other. Read the passage and take a few minutes to quietly consider what it has to say to you and your group.

In the book of Genesis (2:18), the first thing that God says is NOT good is that man should be alone. One of the overarching themes of the Bible is our need for relationship with God and with others. In 1 John 1:7 this theme of fellowship is again highlighted and emphasized. In Romans 1:8-15, we see Paul expressing his intimate desire for togetherness with the church in Rome, despite having never met them previously. Paul was reaching out with love because he not only wanted to be with the Romans, he wanted to invest in their lives and spiritually recharge them. He also wanted to be renewed by the Romans. When we avoid fellowship, we too forfeit spiritual renewal and growth.

Discussion Questions:

In what ways did God speak to you through the sermon? What was most impactful? What stayed with you?

In our modern Western culture that emphasizes self-importance, self-worth, and self-indulgence, it is easy to place serving our own needs and priorities over being in community with others in the Kingdom. However, the Bible states that being alone (even in the presence of others) is not what God created us for.

- How important to you is togetherness with fellow Christians?
 - What does Christian community look like?
 - If it is not very important to you right now, what is getting in the way of true relationship with others/God?
 - How can we strengthen our sense of community with Christ and with each other?

When we are alone, we do not have the opportunity to mirror God's image to others (e.g. forgiveness, love, compassion, confrontation, kindness, etc). In other words, without fellowship, God's love is not communicated to us or through us.

- How are you mirroring God's image to those in your life (coworkers, family, friends, classmates, etc)? Is anything stopping you from doing this?
- How have others mirrored God's image to you?
- Is anyone confronting you, sharpening you for God's use?

Another focal idea inherent in community includes the collection of diverse individuals. God did not come to save one type of people, and it is unacceptable for us to reserve the gospel to a select group (see Jonah). God calls ALL peoples from all backgrounds together to the "Radical Middle".

- How would you describe your "group"? Who is not in your "group"?
- Who are you afraid to reach out to?

LIFEGroups are a great source of community; hopefully you have already found one that you call your own. Let's follow the footsteps of Jesus and Paul by reaching out this week to people both in and outside of the church. Let's ask our brothers and sisters to join us in meaningful and even dangerous fellowship as we build the body of Christ.