

3 WEEKS

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S I O U X L A N D



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SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What do you think it means to be rich?

Big Idea:

We think the local church should be famous for generosity, famous for compassion, famous for showing we are FOR others.

Key Scriptures:

1 Timothy 6:17-19

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

Mark 3:1-6

"Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went

out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.”

Discussion:

We are embarking on an exciting new journey at Sunnybrook as we launch FOR Siouxland – an initiative designed to propel us more into our local community to give, serve, and love.

In a time when the church is known more for what it is against than what it is for, it is our hope that this initiative will not only show that we at Sunnybrook are FOR our community, but that those in our community who are far from God will come to understand that God is FOR them through the love that we show.

We best express our love for God by caring for the people that God loves and expecting nothing in return. And we believe that God measures our commitment to him against our behavior, our compassion and our generosity to others.

1. Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Do you consider yourself as “rich in this present world”? Why or why not?
2. If you do not see yourself as rich, think again. Most of you, simply because you live here in the U.S., are in the top 4% of wage earners in the world. What commands are those who are rich given in this passage?
3. What will happen as a result of being obedient to these commands?
4. Read Mark 3:1-6. Jesus became angry and “deeply distressed” with the Pharisees because they were practicing a religion that tried to value God, but ignored what God values. What does their silence following Jesus’ question communicate about their misguided hearts?
5. What do the actions they took following Jesus’ compassionate healing of the disabled man tell you about their focus?
6. Jesus got angry when religion got in the way of what was important to Him. How do you see that play out in this passage?
7. How do you see that play out in our culture today? How does religion get in the way of the church carrying out Jesus’ mission?

8. Extravagant generosity toward others is the appropriate response to God's extravagant generosity to us. How can you, as part of Sunnybrook Church, contribute to us being famous for generosity, famous for compassion, famous for showing we are FOR others?

Wrapping It Up:

This week we have an opportunity to collectively give to our community to show we are FOR them. If you've not done that yet, please do so by heading out to our website at sunnybrookchurch.org.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for the four non-profits in our community that will be recipients of our generosity this week.

**MEMORY
VERSE:**

*“Command
them to do
good, to be
rich in good
deeds, and to
be generous
and willing to
share.”*

**1 TIMOTHY
6:18**

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Describe a time you were taken by surprise by someone's extravagant treatment or service that made you feel valued.

Big Idea:

As followers of Jesus, we should be famous for how well we treat other people; that's what Jesus did and what he called us to do.

Key Scriptures:

1 Timothy 6:17-18

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share."

Matthew 5:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Discussion:

We continue this week in our discussion of how we can show we are FOR Siouxland. We believe that everyone matters to God, even if God doesn't matter to them. And when you follow Jesus' example to love those who might be considered your enemies, or those who are different from you, or those who are not "your people", you are growing more each day in godliness. That is, doing for those who cannot or will not do for you.

1. Do you sense that the church is generally known for treating people well? Why or why not?
2. Read 1 Timothy 6:17-18. Discuss what it looks like for us as individuals and as a church to be rich in good deeds.
3. Read Matthew 5:43-48. Jesus is challenging his followers to a different way of life- one where they go out of their way to love and serve those outside their "own people". Discuss the challenges in doing that today.
4. Who would you consider to be those outside your "own people"?

5. Identify someone you might consider to be your "enemy" and discuss how you can pray for them and perhaps show an act of love.
6. We want our church, Sunnybrook Community Church, to be seen doing good in our community. So we are partnering with these Siouxland community partners to "do good":
 - Community Action Agency
 - Liberty Elementary
 - Miracle League
 - Her Health
7. How might you and/or your group get involved with a serving opportunity with one or more of these groups in the next couple of weeks?

Wrapping It Up:

Commit to praying for the person you identified as being your enemy.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for every person who is serving our community in the next two weeks, that Jesus' extravagant love will be on display through them and you.



MEMORY VERSE:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.”

MATTHEW 5:43-45

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What people annoy or get under your skin the most?
How do you tend to treat them as a result?

Big Idea:

The primary way we show our love for Jesus is in the way we treat other people.

Key Scriptures:

1 John 2:3-6

"We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did."

John 13:34-35

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 John 2:9

"Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister is still in the darkness."

Discussion:

1. Read 1 John 2:3-6. In this week's message, the concept of "vertical morality" was introduced. That is, reducing our relationship with God down to obedience. How does this passage contribute to this kind of thinking?

2. What acts of obedience do you tend to lean on to keep a right relationship with God?
3. Discuss what it means to live as Jesus did.
4. Read John 13:34-35. How does this passage speak to the concept of "horizontal morality"; that is, your relationship with God being reflected in how you love others?
5. The new covenant that Jesus ushered in is fueled by a single governing thought that shifted the focus from vertical morality to horizontal morality. No longer is a relationship with God about obeying the rules (vertical morality), but a relationship with God is about how you love one another (horizontal morality). In seeking to follow Jesus, have you leaned more toward vertical or horizontal morality?
6. How has your view been challenged from this week's message?
7. Read 1 John 2:9. Everybody is somebody for whom Jesus died, and if you hate/dismiss/ignore/mistreat someone for whom Jesus died, you can't be in the light. How can understanding this impact the way you live in relationship to others?
8. The challenge for this week is to do something thoughtful for someone who maybe shocked that they are even on your radar; to do something uncomfortably good for someone who's not expecting anything good from you; thereby showing you are Jesus' disciple by loving someone who may not be easy to love. Discuss with your group what action you might take.

Wrapping It Up:

Pray together as a group that you might grow in loving others as Jesus has loved you. Confess any hatred or ill will you've had toward another or others, and ask for God's help in walking in the light rather than darkness.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for the preparations for our upcoming Christmas services at Sunnybrook.

MEMORY VERSE:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

JOHN 13:34-35

NOTES:

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?
Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
- Childcare _____
- When we will meet (day of week) _____
- Where we will meet (place) _____
- We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be _____
- Date of this agreement _____
- Date we will review this agreement again _____
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____



SUNNYBROOK
community church

5601 Sunnybrook Drive
Sioux City, Iowa 51106
www.sunnybrookchurch.org