

HOLY HABITS: MAKING MORE DISCIPLES!

[This study assumes all are Christians in the group, and to be fully effective this should last several weeks]

Luke 24:35-49; Acts 1:6-8 EMPOWERING

Welcome everyone and ask them about their week. Remind them of Matthew's commissioning to go and make disciples. Ask them how they are feeling about that. Is this a call for them or someone else?

Open in Prayer

Give thanks and then pray for each member that they will be open to each other, to God's word in the Bible and to the Holy Spirit.

Read the two Passages

Read two different translations and then ask people for any comments.

What did it say?

Present a short commentary on the passage, pointing out:

- The disciples were fearful and troubled, with doubts in their minds.
- They received peace and assurance.
- Jesus taught them from the scriptures
- They had to wait for the Holy Spirit before witnessing
- Their core message was that they were to be witnesses to the significance of the suffering and resurrection of Jesus and to proclaim forgiveness in His name.
- They were to start where they were [Jerusalem] and then go to all nations.
- Ask for any comments.

The first disciples needed reassurance, teaching and the gift of the Spirit before they went out. What do we need by way of equipping to bear witness to Jesus?

When the Spirit came at Pentecost [Acts 2], the disciples were transformed from fearfulness to boldness. Could that happen to us today?

What does it mean for us today?

Could we go through the 6 steps below?

- share our fears, troubles and doubts in the homegroup and bring them to our Lord. [see Philippians 4:6,7, 2 Corinthians 1:3,4, Jude 20-22]
- Ask for God's peace and assurance. [Philippians 4:6,7]

WALKING THE WAY: STUDY MATERIAL (2)

DECEMBER

- Study the Scriptures together, including other relevant passages, [*a Cross Reference or Study Bible would be helpful eg. Luke 24:45-47*]
- Ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Look up references to infilling of the Holy Spirit [eg Acts 2:4, 2:17, 2:38]
- Witness to those we know what Jesus had done in our lives.
Make sure everyone's testimony is tested and ready.
- Ask Jesus if there are any other groups we should witness to.

This may be a slow process but each week the group should be reminded of the final destination [of witnessing]. Always be looking for signs that God is working in their lives and encourage them to witness to each other. Each week there should be a momentum from study, prayer and worship to God's response and then to their action. Impress on them that the Holy Spirit will use them if they are willing, obedient and dependent on God!

Each week encourage them to pray:

- for those they would love to see become disciples of Jesus.
- for their witness to be fruitful.
- for the willingness to go where God sends.
- a fresh infilling of the Spirit.
- for the others in their group.

2nd, 3rd and 4th weeks would follow a similar format but they could begin to explore areas of need in their communities. Where would Jesus be in our communities today? Probably it is amongst the poor and needy, those who are missing out on the affluence of our society, the hungry, the addicted, those in debt or homeless. [Those who are doing well in our society often seem to think they do not need God.] For example the study could explore:

Week 2 Food poverty [eg Foodbanks, www.trusselltrust.org]

Week 3 Addiction [eg Recovery from Addiction courses,
www.therecoverycourse.com www.capuk.org]

Week 4 Debt [eg Debt Advice www.crosslightadvice.org www.capuk.org]

[Homelessness, prison ministry, mental illness, loneliness, family support and support to older people would be other possible areas to be explored. Always asking the question is there a need to be met in our community?]

In all these examples, a social need is being met but there are also good opportunities for evangelism; we know that Jesus transforms lives and we want others to receive that wonderful gift. The charities should therefore be Christian charities. For example on the Recovery from Addiction courses run by RecoveryTwo and CAP [Christians against Poverty], people become Christians when they see the church in action and their needs being met. The poor and needy in our society are in need of help; in need of Jesus. [see Luke 4:18/19 Jesus came to preach good news to the poor, the prisoners, the sick, the oppressed ...]

Each week someone could look up relevant websites for the subject that week and share information with the group.

The final week could review all the information collected and see if there are any mission areas that they could be involved in.

Conclude each week with a sending out prayer: eg

*Go from here to live as God has called you
with the compassion of Jesus
and the power of the Holy Spirit
so that those you meet will catch a glimpse of the glory of God
And see the difference that following Jesus can make.*

Finish by sharing the grace

[All Bible quotes are from the NIV]

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