

Community Group Guide

@ our core – Engaging Communication

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

February 19, 2012

Various Scriptures

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

Week 2 of the "@ our core" series focused on another one of our UNDENIABLE core values: We value **Engaging Communication** and expect the clear, relevant presentation of Scripture to speak life to a dying culture. Pastor Paul broke the value statement into 3 sections:

1. **Engaging Communication:** Engaging Communication is all about our methods. As we read the Bible it becomes obvious that God used all kinds of creative ways to communicate His message. From naked prophets to Jonah in a fish, God engaged people with the way He communicated. Paul did the same in Acts 17 when he spoke to the people of Athens. One of the things we learn from Paul is that you can't be lazy and engaging. In order to be our best at communicating with culture, we've got to study and know the culture around us.
2. **Clear and Relevant:** These words are all about the message, and the most important truth to understand is that God's message is ALWAYS clear (easily understood) and relevant (easily applied) because His message is ALWAYS Jesus. The harder reality is that we are often guilty of sending a confusing message because we feel the need to "help God out" with His message.
3. **Life to a Dying Culture:** This part of our value statement deals with our motives. There are many churches that speak an engaging message, but their motive is to prove themselves right and others wrong. We must be a church that speaks the truth in order to bring the dead to life in Christ.

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Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Sometimes we forget how interesting the Bible really is, but in fact, the Bible is the best example of engaging communication from God to man. Take some time to share some of your favorite (or more interesting) sections of Scripture. (You may remember that for Pastor Paul, the story of Jonah is one of his favorites!!)
- Read Acts 17:16-17. What was Paul doing in Athens (v. 16)? What did Paul do while he was waiting (v. 17)? Discuss the comment Pastor Paul made Sunday: "It's hard to be lazy and engaging."
- Read Psalm 34:8; 1 John 1:1-3; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. What do these verses have in common? What insight does this give you about how God engages us in communicating His message to us about?
- 2 Corinthians 5:19 is clear that God's message is one of reconciliation. What specifically can we learn about that message from verses 20-21?
- If God's message is clear (Romans 1:19-20), then whose message is confusing? 2 Corinthians 11:3 describes Satan's tactics, and it is almost always to confuse us by adding to the "simplicity that is in Christ." (KJV)
- In your own life, how can you simplify the message of Jesus in order to be more effective in telling others about Him?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:14 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. If we are compelled by Christ's love for the lost, we will love them in a way that is consistent with Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13. Take a moment to pray for each other to have that kind of Christ-like, life-giving love in each other's relationships.

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.