

PBCC LifeGroups: *I See a Church...*



Lesson #5 - ... That Cares as Much About Those Who Will Be as Those Who Already Are

Introduction: God has put you in your church for a reason!

When Jesus said he would build his church, he wasn't talking about creating an exclusive club or a building. The church is a community where all are welcome. It's a place where we all, regardless of our background, our gifts, our strengths or our weaknesses, can become a vital part of the body of Christ.

Jesus envisioned that the church would be a place that cares as much about those who will be as those who already are. It's a safe place for people who are in process, who seek truth and, in so doing, find God.

While God asks us to partner with him to reach people who are far from him, it is God who ultimately changes people's hearts and lives. Our job is to welcome everyone, and to model a relationship with God that is attractive and life-giving.

If we're willing to welcome all, and live out our faith in a sincere and winsome way, we'll be like the early church described in Acts 2—and we'll see God add to our number.

Focus Verses: Matthew 16:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Open it! Start with prayer!

1. Do you think some Christians tend to avoid people who don't yet know Christ? Why?

2. Think about someone you know—a co-worker, neighbor or friend—who seems to be far from God. How could you show that person you care about them?

3. Have you ever experienced kindness or generosity from an unexpected person? Tell the story.

Explore it!

4. Watch the video for Session 5. Take some notes about interesting quotes, questions, or ideas:

4.a. **Read Acts 2:46-47.** ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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Reflect on it! Acts 2:46-47

5. Does anything surprise you about these verses? How was the experience of the early church different from how we "do church" today?

6. In the video, we heard about three ways we can partner with God to reach those who are far from him. Read verse 47 again; why do you think they grew so fast? Why were all these people showing up?

Apply it to your life...

7. In the video, we heard that one way we can partner with God is to invest in people. Who are you investing in relationally these days? What is happening as a result?

8. What appeals to you about the way that the early church members lived? What does not appeal to you?

9. How do you think we as a church do at reaching out to those "who will be?" What one specific action will you take this week to show care to someone who is not yet a believer?

To go deeper, check out the resources on the church website under the LifeGroups tab.

How can we pray for each other this week?



Going Deeper in Lesson 5

READ MATTHEW 5:13-16

- ✓ What does it mean to be "salt" to those who don't know God?
- ✓ What does it mean to let your light shine?
- ✓ Why do you suppose Jesus chose these metaphors?

READ 1 PETER 3:15-16

- ✓ What work or study would you need to do in order to be prepared to give an answer about your faith?
- ✓ Is your "answer" about your faith more about what the Bible says, or telling your own story? How can you blend those two things?
- ✓ What attitude does this verse say we should have when telling others about Jesus? Why do you think our attitude matters?

Daily Reflections:

Day 1. READ PSALM 68:4 Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds[b]; rejoice before him—his name is the Lord.

CONSIDER: Spend some time just praising and worshipping God for who he is. What attributes of his character are you thankful for?

Day 2. READ PSALM 68:5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

CONSIDER: Do you know any people who might be forgotten or ignored? Could you invite them to church or just get to know them a bit?

Day 3. READ PSALM 68:6 God sets the lonely in families,[c] he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

CONSIDER: Who is someone you know who would be comforted by the promises in this verse? How could you share it with that person?

Day 4. READ PSALM 68:19 Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.

CONSIDER: In this lesson, we talked about how God does the "heavy lifting" when it comes to drawing people to himself. What burdens are you carrying that you need to let go of and allow God to bear?

Day 5. READ PSALM 68:20 Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death.

CONSIDER: What promise do you find in this verse? Spend some time thinking about that promise and what it means for you and for others you care about. Spend a few moments simply praising God.

Day 6.

Reflect on any thoughts God has put in your heart and mind about the things we have looked at in this session and during your devotional time this week. You may also want to write down observations or questions that you'd like to share with the group at your next meeting.