

Having the Heart

Life Group Agenda for the week of November 13th through 19th

WELCOME (5 min) – Welcome everyone. This is a time for us to focus outward on our relationships with one another. Share the Goals and 1 Guideline. This week, we are beginning our two part series titled, “Ripple.” Let’s **stop and pray** for our church at this time.

WORSHIP (15 min) – This is a time for us to focus upward on our relationship with the Lord. Prepare a creative worship time that can be enjoyed by Children as well as adults/teens (*you will be releasing the Children to their Kids Slot time after the worship*).

WORD (45 min) – This is a time for us to focus inward and discover what the Lord is saying to us individually and collectively through His Word. **This week’s truth to be shared:** *When we are "generous givers" it creates a "ripple effect" that touches and transforms the lives of many people for years to come.*

We all know the saying, "It is better to give than to receive". Yet, most of truly enjoy receiving gifts from others. Many of those gifts, whether they are small or large, stay in our lives for sometimes years, especially when they come from someone we care for. We trust that they thought through what would be the best gift. When they finally decided; it probably excited them to give. It is pretty much the same with God. When the Father was deciding what the best gift was He could give His creation, He knew it had to be what we needed most and would best express His great love for us. His decision: to let us be the recipients of His Son, Jesus Christ. The greatest gift the world has ever known.

INTRODUCTION: What is the best gift you have ever received?

Allow 5 – 7 minutes for this question.

OBSERVATION: Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-15. Paul uses the Macedonian Churches as an example of what it is to “excel in the grace of giving.” Within verses 2 through 5, different attributes about giving are mentioned, what are the multiple attributes that Paul highlights?

Spend about 5 – 7 minutes on this question.

It is easy to overlook the importance of giving to God. We think giving is for those with lots of resources (financial, material, etc.). We sometimes feel that if we don’t have enough to give, then we shouldn’t give at all. However, as we read the verses in 2 Corinthians, we learn they gave joyfully, in the midst of difficult times beyond their ability -- first to God (local church) and, in addition, to the work Paul was doing (missionaries) – and saw it all as a privilege to do so. Giving has little to do with your situation or circumstances; and more to do with your attitude and obedience.

UNDERSTANDING #1: Why is giving to the church such a sensitive or even controversial topic for people?

Giving has become a taboo topic due to the influence of many things. For some, they have been burned by churches that only ask for money. A false teaching has arisen that promotes God’s blessings over your life directly related to giving large amounts of money to the church, and in turn, God will return all that money and blessings multiplied back to you. For some, it is as simple as not really knowing what the Scriptures teach on the matter, and for others they have never experienced the joy that can come through obedience and sacrificial giving.

UNDERSTANDING #2: What stands out to you about the attributes Paul listed, when you think about money (which includes finances, budget and spending), and what is the connection to a person's relationship with God?

Spend about 10 minutes on this question.

UNDERSTANDING #3: Has there been a time in your life when you did not have anything really to give, but you gave anyway? What was it for and how did it all work out?

Spend about 10 minutes on this question.

If you have served God for any length of time, He has probably allowed people into your life that have needs. These are many times great opportunities for us to demonstrate our trust for Him, as well as, to help those He sends our way. If you have followed through, you have most likely experienced the blessing of being an answer to prayer for that individual. However, it is often easy to look for these opportunities while avoiding the starting point of giving. The true starting point is called "tithing." It is the first 10% of your earnings. For many, this is the area that holds them up from truly learning to trust God and His ways. God's economy is very different than ours. Therefore, we have to let Him renew our thinking by His Word, so that we can walk in His ways.

APPLICATION: Once again, looking at the five attributes we have been discussing together today, are any of these attributes lacking in your life? (Short version: to tithe and then give above one's tithe, give beyond ability, give joyfully even in the midst of difficult times, view giving as a privilege.)

Spend about 10 minutes on this question.

PRAY:

WITNESS (15 min) – This is a time for us to focus outward on our ministry to the world.

- ❖ Share any praise reports from your FRAN list that you've been praying for.
- ❖ Haiti Mission Trip: April 23rd – 30th. Total cost: \$1,350. Deadline for application, references and \$200 deposit is January 8th. Ministry opportunities include: medical, orphanage, evangelism and more. Contact Toni Collins at tonic@celebrationchurch.org for more info.
- ❖ Sunday, November 20th – I Want to KNOW Lunch
- ❖ Plan a Thanksgiving SERVE event and bring hope to those less fortunate. Looking for opportunities? Go to <http://www.celebrationchurch.org/service-ministry-opportunities>.
- ❖ Remember: No CoLABorate classes the week of Thanksgiving and the church offices will be closed, Thursday, November 24th and Friday, November 25th.
- ❖ Make Shared Ministry Assignments and then Fellowship together.

(Now is the time to welcome the children back into the group and let them share something about what they've learned. Have a brief time of prayer with the whole group before fellowship).