

Community Group Homework
#BackToChurch
For the week of September 30, 2018

- *Drinks available*
- *Contact person responsible for snack/dessert*
- *A Social or Service Project (Saturate Tampa) should be happening this week and/or next within your group*
- *Pray that your group will grow spiritually individually and as a group*
- *Everyone please fill out emailed feedback form to help group staff prep for next quarter*
- *Encourage members to start an intentional prayer list for people they influence in their life*

QUICK REVIEW

This week's sermon was titled "Back To Church". We explored the three parables found in Luke 15; The Parable of the Lost Sheep, The Parable of the Lost Coin, and the Parable of Lost Son. Was there any one point, comment or verse that particularly challenged you or caught your attention?

(Upon reading the feedback so far, we are trying out this additional section to help jog the memory of members, please let us know if its working!)

MY STORY

1. Who invited you to go to church? If you have been going to church "all your life", how did you find this church?

2. Have you ever strayed from the Christian faith? How did God bring you back?

3. This week's message shared in all three of the parables that the lost was found causing a huge celebration. What's the last big thing you celebrated and how did you celebrate?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. God's mission in Christ is to seek and save the lost. Read the following verses that reinforce the fact that God goes through great lengths to invite all to come and know Him, then answer the questions below with that kind of relentless love in mind.

Psalm 145:8-9

*The Lord is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.*

*[9] The Lord is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made. [NIV]*

Micah 7:18-19

*Who is a God like you,
who pardons sin and forgives the transgression
of the remnant of his inheritance?*

*You do not stay angry forever
but delight to show mercy.*

*[19] You will again have compassion on us;
you will tread our sins underfoot
and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. [NIV]*

Matthew 9:36

[36] When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. [NIV]

Romans 5:6-8

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. [7] Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. [8] But God

demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [NIV]

Who do you think is unworthy of this kind of love?

(Allow time for members to answer. Its possible there is someone in your group that believes they are unworthy. This question may lead to salvation or to encouraging one another of the foundational truth of God's deep love for us.)

Which one of these verses motivates you the most to have a compassionate faith and impact others for Christ?

Which verse do you need to remind yourself when you are feeling unworthy of His love?

2. Followers of Christ are given the privilege of modeling and helping others understand that God loves them and the importance of following Christ. Read the scripture below and consider how you can make Kingdom impact in everyday activities.

(Challenge members to first think of an everyday activity that involves others; driving to work, running errands, walking the neighborhood are examples and THEN read the verses in that context)

John 13:34

[34] “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.[NIV]

Colossians 4:5-6

[5] Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. [6] Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.[NIV]

1 Peter 3:15-16

[15] But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, [16] keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.[NIV]

1 Timothy 1:12-16 *(This is Paul's viewpoint and the question below directly addresses it)*

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. [13] Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. [14] The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

[15] Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. [16] But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. [NIV]

How does the Apostle Paul's understanding of his past and what God did for him impact his viewpoint of others?

3. Jesus used the parable of the Great Banquet to force his listeners to consider how they have actually responded to God's call. Read the parable and then answer the questions below.

Luke 14:15-24

[15] When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

[16] Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. [17] At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

[18] "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

[19] "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

[20] "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

[21] "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

[22] "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

[23] "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. [24] I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"[NIV]

Who are the poor, crippled, blind and lame who are invited to take their place?

(The ones on the fringe of society, the ones that you try not to stare at, and the ones you feel sorry for because of the way they live or behave are the ones that Jesus spent time with.)

What excuses keep you from feasting with God?

On a scale of 1 (not hungry) to 10 (ravenous), how would you describe your appetite right now for the things of God?

4. What instructions does Jesus give us in Matthew 5:43-46 when it comes to inviting and welcoming everyone to the “dinner”?

Matthew 5:43-46

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' [44] But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, [45] that you may be sons 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. [46] If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? [NIV]

What are some potential reasons that make it difficult to follow these instructions?

TAKING IT HOME

(USE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER REQUESTS.)

1. Which of the following “kingdom priorities” do you struggle with the most? Which do you struggle with the least?

- personal devotion time
- family devotional time
- regular church participation
- sharing my gifts and talents
- sharing my material resources
- sharing my faith
- inviting the unsaved over for dinner/to church/to church activity

Look back at what you wrote down above. Which two or three do you want to put into action this week?

2. Our prayer at STF is that each of us get to celebrate an eternal salvation of someone who is lost right now. Who are you hoping to celebrate? Write their name down here and in one place you see everyday. Be intentional in your pursuit for our Shepherd to find this lost lamb.

PRAYER REQUESTS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Women's Fall Conference

Sign up is NOW!!! The conference is October 26-27 beginning Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. and conclude Saturday at 1:00 p.m. Author Erin Straza is our guest speaker and twins, Kellie & Kristin Fuselier will be leading us in worship. Tickets are \$39 each. If the price tag is what is stopping you from saying yes, there is a scholarship for you, just contact Lauren Cordner at lauren@stfchurch.com. If you would like an opportunity to purchase a scholarship so you can bless someone, you can do that too!

The Ultimate Play Date

Saturday, Oct 6 from 10am-12pm in the fellowship hall at the BP campus, there will be bounce houses for preschool and elementary kids, snacks, and more! Bring friends!

Operation Christmas Child

Beginning next Sunday, please pick up a shoebox or two and pack it with small toys, hygiene items, and school supplies for children around the world to have a gift to open through Samaritan's Purse ministry. What a great family opportunity!

Trunk or Treat!

Register your trunk to get themed up and filled with treats to share with kids from church and local community kids! This is an event that is fun for the whole family and an excellent way to reach out to South Tampa. The event is hosted on Oct 31 at the BP campus parking lot.

You can find more events and ways to serve at <https://stfchurch.com/serve/> and <https://stfchurch.com/events/>

