

Acts: Multiply (Acts 20:1-38)

For the week of July 3, 2016

Spiritual Discipline Checkup

Spiritual disciplines can be described as those behaviors that help our spiritual growth and enable us to grow to spiritual maturity. The process of spiritual growth and development begins to take place the moment a person encounters the risen Christ and comes to him for salvation. How are you doing in the following disciplines?

- Quiet time – Spending daily time alone to be with God.
- Study – Spending daily time reading the Scriptures and meditating on its meaning and importance in our lives.
- Prayer – Daily talking to and listening to God about your relationship with Him and about the concern of others.
- Fellowship – Mutual caring and ministry in the body of Christ.

Discuss in your group.

Acts 20:1-6

- Read the story in Acts 20:1-6. As a group rebuild the story.

After three years in Ephesus, Paul decided to return to Jerusalem with a number of stops on the way. He revisits Macedonia and Greece (Corinth) where he spent three months. He was planning to sail from Corinth to Jerusalem, but discovered a Jewish plot to murder him. So he changes plans and backtracks through Macedonia by land and on to Troas where he is joined by seven men, including Luke. As reps of various churches, they carried monetary gifts for the Jerusalem church and planned to accompany Paul to Jerusalem.

Observation: Paul gave “them much encouragement.” How could Paul teach and encourage Christians when his own life was in danger? Has there been someone who has encouraged you in your day-to-day life? In your ministry?

Application: Paul had traveling companions who were involved in his ministry. Describe ways that ministry is best accomplished as a team.

Acts 20:7-16

- Read the story in Acts 20:7-16. As a group rebuild the story.

Luke's record of this visit gives a rare glimpse of a regular early church meeting. It looks more like a family gathering than a formal “worship service.” That's as it should be. After all, Jesus promised his followers they'd have a family – brothers and sisters, parents and children (Mark 10:29-30). As we deal with life and its pressures, only a family can meet the Christian's need for support.

Observation: Listed below are some key facts from this early church meeting. What is your observation of each fact? What is the most appealing aspect of this service? The least appealing?

1. They met on Sunday:

2. They ate together:

3. They met at night:

4. They met three floors up:

5. The length of the meeting was not regulated by the clock:

Interpretation: Do you share this viewpoint about the church expressed by author Philip Yancey: “Anyone can form a club; it takes grace, shared vision, and hard work to form a community. The Christian church was the first institution in history to bring together on equal footing Jews and Gentiles, men and women, slaves and free.” Describe what it means to be part of a church family.

Application: In this passage Paul was saying goodbye. Recall a time when you said goodbye. Were you leaving a child at college or camp? Were you embracing a close friend before you moved to another city? Were you sitting by the hospital bed of a loved one? Changing jobs? Leaving a ministry that drew you together? What were the circumstances? How did you feel? Share with the group healthy ways to handle separation.

Acts 20:17-38

- Read the story in Acts 20:17-38. As a group rebuild the story.

Paul's Miletus address is the sole example in Acts of a major speech to Christians. Of all Paul's speeches in Acts, it has the most in common with his letters, which were addressed to Christians. Paul held out his own ministry as an example for the Ephesian elders, spoke of his future prospects, warned of coming heresies and encouraged a proper attitude toward material goods.

Observation: From this passage make a list of the specific duties that Paul urges Christian leaders to do either by example and/or direction.

Observation: From this passage make a list of the specific character traits that Paul urges Christian leaders to have, either by example and/or direction.

Application: Consider that these traits can be applied to anyone who is “leading” or caring for anyone else in the Christian community. They are requirements at any level. You need them if you are trying to help a new Christian grow, or to support a person who is hurting, or to lead a small group – as well as if you are leading a whole church. How are you doing at them?

Pray

- Pray for our staff and the preparation in progress for Vacation Bible School (VBS).
- Pray for the children who will be on campus and hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for the volunteers and parents as they give of their time.
- Pray for many children to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.