

# St Paul's Dorking Small Groups: 18 September 2005

## Whose Church is it anyway? Called to love one another

Acts 4:32- 35 John 13:1- 38



### Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

#### Called to love one another... Called to a new community

The main areas we are thinking through this week:

- Why ... Has God been calling us towards the 3 love vision?
- How ... Might we better express the calling of community?
- What ... Are some of the obstacles and challenges?

#### 1) Why all the talk about our vision and calling as a church?

- Because it's God's way ... He has a pattern for relationships (See: Matt 22:37-40, Jn 13:35, 1Jn:4:12, 1Jn:4:19 1Jn:5:2 )
- Because that's how God grows and builds us up (See: Eph:4:16)
- Because we believe it is how we can both express obedience to God's call and be in the flow of what God is doing.

#### Key verse from Acts 4 : Unity and community:

"All the believers were one in heart and mind, no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had."

#### Key verse from John 13 : The way of love through humility:

"Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love."

#### Key verse from John 13: The impact of a loving community:

" By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"

#### 2) How might we better express the calling to community?

- By moving on from our baggage and our misconceptions of what church life is. (His, Our or My Church?)
- By recognising that true spiritual health is revealed in relationships.( See 1Cor:13:1-3)
- By adopting the pattern of our Master and finding a new humility, a servant spirit, and a forgiveness and acceptance of others. (The humility of the master vs the hard heart and "not me" attitude of Peter as seen in Jn:13:6- 8).

#### 3) What are some of the obstacles and challenges?

- Find connections at 3 levels: 1) Celebration, 2) Cell, and 3) Accountable relationships.
- Be patient, it takes time, get stuck in!
- Beware the me-mindset ... thinking that all church life and relationships should focus on 'me'!

#### 4) Summary: The life of the community:

"The Christian church is not a building or a static institution. It is when men and women flesh out in their daily lives the meaning of faith and the reality of the risen Christ ... and come together to make it happen!"



### Questions to discuss:

- Ice Breaker/Welcome: What is your first memory of "church"?
- Do you feel connected to the vision of our church and have a sense in your own life of the need to reflect the pattern of relationships that we call the 3 loves?
- How would you describe our community at St Paul's? Where do we best express a loving community and where are we not so good? Can you share an experience where the verse "*All men shall know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another*" has been real and alive?
- What do you think are some of the biggest areas of baggage and misconceptions we carry with us with regard to "church" and /or Christian community? What are some of your big hang-ups and frustrations with "church"?
- Read John 13: What strikes you afresh about Jesus' actions and pattern for the way of loving relationships?
- "Spiritual health check ... revealed in the quality of our relationships" ... How healthy are we?
- What are some of the practical steps you feel you could take to contribute your part to us being a better, loving, and living Christian community at St Paul's?