

A Welcome Heart That Imitates Christ Small Groups Fall 2009

Introduction

Welcome to Small Groups for Fall 2009! These next few weeks in Small Groups, we are going to examine ourselves to see if we have a welcome heart. Tonight we will be looking to imitate Christ as He welcomes all. Then for the following weeks, we will look at a welcome to the poor, a welcome to the stranger, then a welcome to the joint heirs - brothers and sisters in Christ.

Give your best slang expression for “welcome” whether it’s yours or someone you know. (ex. “Ya’ll come back now, ya hear!”)

Have you ever wondered how to be a more welcoming person in your Christian walk? What would the benefit of a welcome heart be?

Is a welcoming heart necessary or not available to all – perhaps like a gift that you do not possess?

Be imitators

Read Matthew 22:1-10. Let’s examine this passage in light of the welcome the king had. There was an initial invitation to some, when they wouldn’t come, the invitation was extended to as many people as the slaves could find.

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt burned because people rejected your welcoming heart? What did you do in this situation?

Looking back at the passage in Matthew 22, what did the king do when the initial invitation was ignored besides what is found in verse 7? How can this encourage us to further our welcome heart to others even though our initial welcome was ignored?

Read Philippians 2:1-8. What are some specifics in this passage which are tied to our subject of having a welcome heart to others? Two examples are encouragement in Christ and consolation of love. What are some others?

Jesus says “COME”

When someone says “come”, usually what that indicates is a welcome. Let’s look at when Jesus said “come” in scripture and consider how we could have the same welcome heart to others.

Read the following passages and discuss how this shows Christ’s welcome heart to all.

- Matthew 11:28
- Matthew 14:28, 29
- Luke 19:5
- John 7:37

Which passage stands out the most in terms of a “welcoming heart” that we can imitate from Christ?

Read the following passage and notice the condition of the call to come:

- 2 Corinthians 6:17 – NASB “Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR; And I will welcome you.”

God’s welcoming heart is in sync with His Holiness. As imitators of Christ, how can we maintain purity in our lives, while welcoming others who may not be so pure?

Spend time in prayer

Consider areas where you have not been welcoming as Christ was. A wonderful way to have a welcome heart to others is to begin to pray for them. Then as you see them, you are already welcome to inviting them into your life and sharing the love of Christ with them.