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Enriching Christian Community

Encouragement – part 2

In our last study we were given an 'assignment' involving reading the Bible with a friend. How did this go for you? Evaluate your time on the basis of the following definition of Christian Encouragement:

"Christian Encouragement is speaking God's powerful word to someone in love, that they might grow to maturity in Christ."

Why do you think we might have been asked to do this Bible reading exercise?

In this study we shall consider how we partner with God in the process of encouraging another person and look at some of the practicalities of what to say and how to say it.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Paul is writing to the troubled Corinthians who have become divided in their loyalties for different church leaders such as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas (Peter)—see 1 Cor 1:11-12. Read now 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

- 1. What is God's role in Christian growth? What is ours?

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- 2. What can happen when we:

- (a) think too highly of our role?

- (b) don't think highly enough of our role?

- 3. Why do you think that Paul describes himself and Apollos as "God's fellow workers" (v9)?

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- 4. Think of as many different ways as possible that Christians can be involved in 'planting' and 'watering'; as the passage puts it. What role might someone have if they were not good at, for example, public Bible teaching or personal evangelism?

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What might you say to a person who says, "I don't want to take on the responsibility for leading a small group because I'm afraid I'll get it wrong and damage their growth? (see also 1 Thess 5:11, 23-24; 1 Pet 5:10)

Let's get practical: Moving from Spectators to Players

If you have access to a DVD player, look at the short audio-visual provided to your leader and jot down some notes as you go.

It is important to say what God says, but how important is the way that we say it?

What if what we say causes offense?

- What really matters:
- Paul's approach:
- Life and action:
- Conclusion:

Closing Discussion (optional)

1. What do you think is the difference between Christian Encouragement (as presented in these studies) and just talking with someone?
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2. What steps might you take in order to become better equipped as an encourager?
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3. What steps might you take in order to open up opportunities to encourage another person?
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Practical Assignment

Each week we are given a 'practical assignment' in encouragement. This week's assignment is the same as last week's. Use the attached worksheet and meet up again with the same person to share briefly around the bible passage noted on the worksheet.

Bible reading worksheet 2

God's word changes us; and through us it can change others as well.

Sometime before meeting with your Bible Reading Partner, take 15 minutes to prepare.

Before:

1. Take 5 minutes to pray for God to speak to you and then read the passage.
2. Write down up to five insights from the passage that you personally find helpful or challenging.
3. Note down any questions or things you are not sure about.

The meeting itself (20 minutes or so)

1. Share with your partner the insights and questions you have each written down.
 2. At the end of your discussion, fill in the final section of the sheet.
 3. Pray together about what you've learned and how it applies.
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Reading the Bible Together

Bible Passage: James 1:19-27

What do you think is the main idea of the passage?

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5 points from the passage

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Questions:

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Discussion Summary (fill this in together)

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