

CELL NOTES
For Neil Edbrooke's talk on 18 JANUARY 2009

VALUES
DISCIPLESHIP

Background

Why are values important? Because they direct our lives like the rudder under a ship, hidden, but always giving direction.

What are they? The things we prize the most

Did Jesus consider them important for a Christian? Absolutely! He said: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be.

Conclusion? What I treasure will shape my life. If these things don't change, or line up with Jesus' call to us, we may say the right things, even do good things, but at heart, we'll be disappointed. Jesus knew that if our heart changes, the whole landscape of life will change, but without this, nothing changes.

How do we identify our values?

From a positive point of view, ask: What do I most look forward to in life? (A holiday in Ibiza? A new car? Marriage?) Jesus never condemned such things. He simply said: Seek first the Kingdom and these other, lesser significant things, would be worked in as well. Ortberg says: things / money / objects, make good servants, but tyrannical masters.

From a negative point of view, ask: What do I most worry about in life? What concerns and keeps me awake at night?

Disciples

Values are formed over the long term. They may not be obvious in one day, or over a week. This is why Jesus' central call was to one thing: long term commitment. He knew that all kinds of ups and downs occur, seasons of life, challenges and opportunities. To navigate through these, and to reach our highest potential as people, we need to do one thing consistently: follow him. Discipleship was his prime call to all people. To be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus, not a theological expert, an expert in prayer, a master of bible study, or a religious observer.

For BCF, a foundational value lies at the root of this call to follow: *the church is a group of friends, committed to one another, and committed to following Jesus.*

When we put discipleship of this kind into practice, we realize that church is living, breathing, dynamic and continual... 24 hour-a-day community. Sunday meetings are not church, people are the church. The church is a movement of people, living all of life in search of Jesus' will and purpose for us and for his world. The church is a

company of friends seeking to continue the work that Jesus has begun. He created and commissioned the church for this purpose.

Illustration. Read Luke 11: 29-32

Jesus is annoyed that people are missing the point. They want instant answers, quick fixes, and spectacular miracles. People in those days seemed to prefer entertainment and short term solutions, to genuine change and transformed living. How strange...

Jesus tells them that his power is not a party trick. His real mission is new creation, new life, changed hearts, transformed lives. He pointed them to the astonishing story of Jonah.

Three themes from the book of Jonah

- Disciples follow the will of God
- Disciples discover the heart / compassion of God
- Disciples advance the purpose of God

CELL QUESTIONS

Discussion on Discipleship

1 How easy is it to trust the will of God? Is it good for me? Is it risky? Does it make sense? What kinds of other voices and directions am I tempted to follow?

2 Do I know much about God's ability to reach us at our lowest point? Can I give any real life examples of someone who discovered the compassion of God? Have I ever been at rock bottom, with nowhere else to turn? Is it ever too late for God's grace to make a difference?

3 How can I / we engage with the purpose of God? Where might "Nineveh" be for me / us? What happens to us as a church when we keep our Christian life to ourselves? What happens when we give it away?