

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS INTENTIONAL: Jesus' Vision for Us Together

INTRO: This week's teaching addressed Jesus' big picture purpose for the church He purposed to build [i.e., to prevail against the *gates of hell*]. It urged that Jesus' specific call to Christ Community Church in Ames was to especially initiate in ministry that seeks both to enrich family health/life and to extend redemptive care to those from around the world.

Begin with Your HEART

It seems everyone has had a different experience with "church" over the years. For some, it was encouraging, positive, nurturing. It helped set one's personal, spiritual, and moral compass. Solid friendships happened as faith in God and confidence in life grew. For others, church life and experiences were boring if not downright confusing. You wanted to be anywhere else. To **kick off your study together**, share two things with your group.

- #1 Was your experience with "church" more on the "plus" side or did it drift toward the "minus"?
- #2 What were the "pluses" or the "minuses" for you?
- #3 Out of your experiences, what did you conclude "church" was for?

In the WORD

For a few moments, let's enter the life of one of the churches in the New Testament – the church which met in the city of Philippi. Turn to Philippians as a group. Our objective is to do the following

- #1 READ the letter out-loud together, around the circle. Have each read a paragraph, and then the next.
- #2 AS OTHERS ARE READING, jot down your observations [& what verses your observation comes from] about 3 questions:

One – What is this church for? [What do you hear Paul saying about WHY Jesus' church is in Philippi?]

Two – What can diminish the effectiveness of a church?

Three – What can energize the effectiveness of a church?

- #3 AFTER THE READING, share what you observed in answering these 3 questions:
What did you learn? What surprised you? What real-person examples did you see?

Garrison Keillor once commented on the importance of a church which energizes a changed life: *If you can't go to church and at least for a moment be given transcendence, if you can't pass briefly from this life into the next, then I can't see why anyone should go. Just a brief moment of transcendence causes you to come out of church a changed person.*

My LIFE - our MISSION

In our INTENTIONAL series, we've been exploring what Jesus can do when his disciples are *purposeful*. We've been urged to understand: *What is Christ Community Church for?* Review for a moment

our MISSION: We exist to connect people to life-defining relationships in Christ

our VALUES: transparent relationships, purposeful responsiveness, intergenerational disciples, radical generosity

our STRATEGY: Gather in worship, Connect in relationships, Serve the mission

our MEASURES: the 6 Life-Questions [can you state them?]

Ultimately, we are prayerfully asking the Lord Jesus to build His church through us, as people are loved and their lives are redeemed and transformed in Jesus. **FINISH** by praying about what you discovered in Philippians about what can energize our effectiveness as a church. What has the Lord challenged you to bring to the life of our Body which can make "church" a life-changing experience for others?