

Bible Study on Church Life

(A Bible Study on Psalm 13 and Acts 2:42-47- "This Is The Church")

Resources for the activity

1. At the end of these notes you'll find a full print-out of Roger's prayer. We would suggest that you print and hand these out to your group as an aid for reflection and discussion.
2. "This Is The Church" film from prayerscapes and laptop or computer
3. Instrumental CD music for reflection time
4. Enough Bibles for the group
5. Sufficient paper and pens for the group

Hand out copies of "Roger's Prayer"

Begin by praying and then watch "This Is The Church" from the prayerscapes website here:

http://www.prayerscapes.com/FilmPages/this_is_the_church_video_youtube.html

Next, read Psalm 13 together

Questions for the group

1. How do we feel about the hard realities of grief, anger or fear that we find in the Psalms? Is it a mistake that they are written there, or is there some purpose to them?
2. As we witness, do we see these realities as strengths or as weaknesses?

Now read Acts 2:42-47

Some more questions for discussion

1. Take time to reflect on this scripture and then make a list of the different ways in which heaven was touching earth in the early church.
2. "This is the Church. A place for idealists and dreamers...A place where Heaven touches earth" As church together today, how can we reflect the glory of heaven here on earth?

Now watch "This Is The Church" again, and reflect on the tensions that are found in being church together – sharing the grief and the pain, the joy and the hope.

Creative Group Response

Distribute the paper and pens and invite people to compose their own Psalm to God. Encourage people to reflect on the discussion and Roger's Prayer, and write from the heart. People could write out of dark experiences, where God has seemed distant, or very close experiences of God's presence.

Neil Haydock & Roger Ellis

<http://www.prayerscapes.com>

This is the Church Roger Ellis (leader, Revelation Church, Chichester) - the following words are the text from a spontaneous prayer that Roger prayed as an introduction to a talk at a national worship conference

Roger's Prayer

Let's embrace the cry of heaven. To see humanity filled with the light, the love and the Glory of God.
Human beings in their right mind, cleansed of darkness, sin and brokenness, restored to the place they should be.
Walking in the garden with the Father, enjoying fellowship with him, lives restored so they can be who they were intended to be.

Connected, fulfilled. The hole that's in their life that no one else can fill other than the Creator – filled.
People released to be a celebration of their humanity, a celebration of who they are, who they were made to be.
Church connected together in the presence of God, a strange parable.
A parable of unanswered questions. A parable of broken lives.
A parable of great celebration, of forgiveness and healing received now.
Of great triumph, a living party- such is Church.

Many tensions yet the presence of God upon us.
Both the glory and the shame all in one community.
Capable of great acts of service, yet at the same time lacking in so many ways.
This is the Church. A place for idealists and dreamers, a place for a very 'real

reality'.

A place where Heaven touches earth.

A place where we get so caught up with God's forgiveness and Glory we think we are never going to come down.

A place where we touch so much dirt we wonder whether we are ever going to see God again.

Because there is so much pain, so much brokenness in people's lives and that's what the Gospel is for.

We must not be ashamed of the tensions. We must not be disillusioned by the failures we will surely experience.

We must not put down the gifts God has given us because it hasn't worked.

Because we will be criticised, we will fail and we will be persecuted, it's a promise. It's in the Bible.

But there are also promises of great forgiveness, triumph and healing.

Serving God is all about living in the tensions, walking with God day by day.

It's about the meals and the feasting. Making our homes open places, having our lives invaded by the agendas of others.

At times, when the last thing we would want to do is to lead a group of people, talk to another person or share our faith, we do it. Because we know Jesus has laid his life down far more and at a far greater level than ever we could.

But it's also about pulling to one side, putting our feet up and lighting a fire in the garden in the middle of winter.

Sitting there all wrapped up, with a nice bottle of chilled chardonnay and some wicked seafood.

Just sitting there with your partner, with your feet up. Looking at the fire, looking at the stars in the heavens.

All that beautiful array.

Just being thankful to God that we are alive. That we have been saved, that God is with us, God is journeying with us.