

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, September 23, 2007

Passage: Acts 20:17-27

Memory Passage: James 4:6

TODAY: From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 20:13-17.** Why didn't Paul go to Ephesus personally (also Romans 15:25-26)? Why did Paul consider this so important (Galatians 2:10)?
- (b) Why are meeting these needs important for the church (James 1:27; Isaiah 58:6-7)?
- (c) What does Paul remind the Ephesian elders of in Acts 20:35? How would this motivate Paul in ministry? Did he understand his ministry to only be sharing the gospel?
- (d) After you have completed the lesson, answer this last question: How is a giving heart also a qualification for those in leadership? How was this seen in Paul's life and ministry?
- (e) *Family:* Read Acts 20:13-17 and Isaiah 58:6-7. Talk about Christian giving. What did Jesus say about giving in Acts 20:35? Why is this true? Why would it be especially true for believers? Pray together about how you can show Christ's love through meeting the needs of someone this week.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 20:18-19.** What is especially significant about this message that Paul gives to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:25)? What is Paul trying to leave them with?
- (b) When he begins, what does he speak about *first* in verse 18? Why is this the most important issue in ministry (2 Corinthians 6:3)? What do most churches think is most important?
- (c) Read the qualifications for an elder in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Which qualifications relate to the character of an elder? Are there any that refer to his giftedness or abilities?
- (d) Some suggest that "apt to teach" refers to ability. This word is only found in 2 Timothy 2:24. What is Paul referring to in 2 Timothy 2:24-26 teaching or something else? Are all believers supposed to be able to teach (Hebrews 5:12)?
- (e) A similar passage is found in Titus 1:9-11. What *type* of teaching is he talking about there? Why is it essential that an elder know sound doctrine and be able to properly confront those who teach false doctrine?
- (f) Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. What does Peter tell the elders is their responsibility (verse 2)? What is one of the main ways they do this (1 Peter 5:3)? How does this help to explain why the personal life of an elder is much more important than gifts or abilities (Philippians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 11:1)?
- (g) *Family:* Read Acts 20:18-19 and 1 Corinthians 11:1. Why is the life of a Christian leader so important? What did Paul say about his life when he spoke to these elders? What would the church be like if everyone followed your example? Pray for your leaders that they might live as examples of following Christ.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7.** Is there anything required of an elder that should not be true of every Christian man (1 Timothy 3:5 and 1 Timothy 3:15 indicate that serving in your home is a qualification for serving in the church)? What does this tell you about the importance of being an example to the flock?
- (b) How did Paul say that he served the Lord (Acts 20:18)? Why is this so essential in leadership (Mark 10:43-44)?
- (c) What is the chief way he describes his manner of life (Acts 20:19)? How did Paul view his life and ministry in 1 Corinthians 15:10 (also 2 Corinthians 3:5)? How did he remind all believers to live (1 Corinthians 4:7)?
- (d) How did Peter, an apostle of the Lord, consider himself in relationship to the other elders of Christ's church (1 Peter 5:1)?
- (e) What attitude did Peter encourage young believers to have in 1 Peter 5:5-6? Why did he encourage this (also James 4:6)? Is this the chief characteristic for pastors and church leaders today? What would Paul and Peter say about the approach to leadership in most evangelical churches today?
- (f) *Family:* Read 1 Peter 5:1-4 and James 4:6. What is humility? Why is it important for believers? Why is it especially important for leaders? How does God respond to those who are not humble? Pray for a humble heart in all situations.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 20:20-21.** What two teachings formed the essence of Paul's ministry among the Ephesians (Acts 20:21)? How would you distinguish between the two? Why are both important?
- (b) Which word is often missing in today's evangelism (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; 17:30; 26:20)? What does this word mean and why is it ignored today?
- (c) What did Paul say was the goal of his teaching (Acts 20:20; also 20:27)? What does his use of the word "profitable" or "helpful" tell us about Paul's teaching? Is instruction the ultimate goal of our teaching (1 Timothy 3:17; Colossians 1:28)?

- (d) *Where* did Paul do this teaching? Compare Paul's approach with that of the apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 5:42)?
- (e) What does he probably mean by *publicly* (Act 14:1; 17:1; 17:10)? What else might the public teaching have included (Acts 17:17)? What does he mean "from house to house" (Acts 2:46; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:9; Colossians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:6-8)?
- (f) *Family*: Read Acts 20:20-21. What is repentance and faith? How do they differ? Why are both important? Pray for someone today who does not know Christ.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 20:22-27**. What did Paul expect would happen to him in Jerusalem?
- (b) How did this affect his decision to go to Jerusalem (Acts 20:24)? What attitude did he have about his life (Philippians 1:21)?
- (c) What was his one desire in life (Acts 20:24)? What did he say about this race in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 3:13-15 and 2 Timothy 4:6-8?
- (d) How did Paul say he wanted to finish this race (Acts 20:24)?
- (e) Why did Paul say he was "innocent of the blood of all men?" What was he referring to (Ezekiel 33:1-11)? What had he done that gave him this confidence?
- (f) *Family*: Read Acts 20:22-27 and Philippians 1:21. What motivated Paul to endure suffering and to face persecution? What attitude toward life should we also have? Pray that you too might have a heart to serve God until the final day of your life.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Acts 20:17-27. Where does Paul call the Ephesian elders to come and meet with him? Why were his words especially important to them and to us? What are some characteristics of Paul's life and ministry that show his heart? Pray for tomorrow's gathering of believers that we might all serve the Lord with joy and gladness.

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The Heart of God's Servant

"...serving the Lord with all humility..."