



IGNITE ❖ March 30, 2008

1. The church is described in various ways throughout the New Testament. Take a look at some of the following metaphors:

- ❖ 1 Corinthians 3:9 – God’s field, God’s building.
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 3:16 – God’s temple.
- ❖ Ephesians 5:32 – bride of Christ.
- ❖ Hebrews 3:6 – God’s house.
- ❖ 1 Peter 2:5 – spiritual house, royal priesthood.
- ❖ 1 Peter 2:9 – chosen people, holy nation, people belonging to God.

Discuss what these metaphors tell you about the church.

Leader Hints:

There are numerous metaphors for the church in the New Testament, but at the heart of these metaphors is relationship – with God and others. These statements are true not only of the “BIG C” Church (the universal church of all followers of Jesus) but also of the “little c” church (the local church). These letters were all written to churches in specific geographical locations. The believers would have understood these metaphors as applying not only to all followers of Jesus wherever they were but also (perhaps mostly) to them and their specific situation.

2. What do you think of Pastor Earl’s statement: “God has designed us to live in community with other followers of Jesus; in fact, the quality of your relationship with God is dependent on the quality of your relationship with other followers of Jesus”?

Leader Hints:

This statement forces us to think about how interdependent we are. In North America, most of us think about our relationship with God purely from a personal perspective. But the majority of the “you” statements in the NT epistles are plural, addressed not to individuals but to a group of people. There are numerous “one another” statements in the NT (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Romans 12:10; Hebrews 13:16; Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; etc.) that show a definite directive toward an emphasis on spiritual maturity obtained through biblical community. One practical example of this is Hebrews 10:24-25. Each individual does bear responsibility for his or her own relationship with God, but we are not created for lone-ranger Christianity.

3. Rehearse the “4 i’s” – INVEST, INVITE, IGNITE, IMPACT. These words are an attempt to describe how OBC designs itself around relationship (our identity). What does IGNITE mean?

Leader Hints:

IGNITE are the opportunities that we have to grow in our understanding of and relationship with God, with the hope that we will be motivated to go out and serve others with the love of Christ. There are two very important points here – growing in our relationship with God AND growing in our desire to serve others. There are three key things that we commit ourselves to in this area – Sundays, small groups, and spiritual disciplines.

4. Why are Sundays important?

Leader Hints:

- ❖ *You can overestimate the importance of Sunday. Some people think that Sunday is all there is to church (but it is not). Discuss why that could be the case.*
- ❖ *You can also underestimate the importance of Sunday. Some people think that Sunday is not all that critical (but it is). Discuss how a proper recognition of the importance of Sunday could impact our attendance and/or participation.*

5. Pastor Earl spoke of a “holy expectation” when we gather together for worship on Sundays. How much of a holy expectation do you believe that people have when it comes to gathering on Sundays at OBC? Why is that the case? What could you do to allow that sense of expectation to grow in your own life?

6. At OBC our Sunday gatherings are focused on two main things: (1) receiving God's message and (2) responding to who God is and what he has done/is doing in our lives. Rehearse the power of God's Word (2 Timothy 3:15-17) and the importance of preaching/teaching Scripture (1 Timothy 4:13). Rehearse the importance of responding to who God is and what he has done/is doing (Revelation 4-5). What are some ways that we can prepare ourselves and fully engage in receiving God's message and responding to him on Sunday mornings?