

LIFE
TOGETHER
DISCUSSION GUIDE

Choose Love

1 Corinthians 8.1-13

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Share plans for future Community Group gatherings and the following happening in the life of the church:

- **Men's Summit | Friday, November 3rd 6:30a** @ the church building. Gentlemen, join the men of New City coffee & donuts, a short talk, a story of faith, discussion, and prayer. No preparation required.
- **MEMBERS' MEETING Monday, November 6th @ 7p** | We'll be holding officer elections, talking about the ministry year, and spending time in worship and prayer.
- **PUMPKINLAND PLAYDATE Tuesday, October 24th @9:15am** | Parents of small kids, a great outing. Cost is \$5 per person (1yr+). Check the bulletin or online for payment and registration info.
- **PEANUT BUTTER DRIVE for City Gospel Mission** | City Gospel Mission has asked New City to provide 275 15oz jars of peanut butter for their annual Thanksgiving Food Exchange again this year. If you're willing and able to help with the drive, you can drop off your jars of peanut butter in the Commons or on the Kersey's front porch (4413 Floral Ave). The deadline to bring the peanut butter in is Sunday, November 12th.

Again this week, talk briefly about your group's format and schedule for the semester.

We believe that people experience and grow in their faith when they spend time reflecting on God's Word, and also hearing from other Christians. That's what we're hoping for tonight.

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group in prayer. Pray extemporaneously, or use this prayer:

Father, we thank you for the chance to be together tonight. As we talk and reflect on the Scriptures, may we take these things to heart. Help us to bring our lives more and more under the direction and care of your Word. Bare with us when we fail. Help us to help each other. Amen.

OPENER

Especially in these early weeks, taking time to introduce yourselves and getting to know each other is important. Open by asking folks to **introduce themselves**: *name, and other interesting tidbit if you'd like (i.e. hometown, where you live in Cincinnati, what you do during the day).*

Then ask, *What was the best costume you ever had (for Halloween or otherwise)?*

STUDY/DISCUSSION

Our series this fall is called "Life Together." We'll be working our way through the first 10 chapters of 1 Corinthians. This week we begin to listen in on Paul's pastoral counsel about how to navigate the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 8.1-13

2. What would you say is the issue or problem Paul is discussing here? What does the issue of eating meat sacrificed to idols have to do with US?
3. At first glance it may seem as if this passage is too culturally distant for us to make much sense of. Read the following from commentator Richard Hays: "Feasts held in temples were common events in the daily life of a Greco-Roman city. For example, the sanctuary of Asclepius in Corinth comprised both an area for cultic sacrifice and several dining rooms that opened onto a pleasant public courtyard. The wealthier Corinthians would have been invited to meals in such places as a regular part of their social life, to celebrate birthdays, weddings, healing attributed to the god, or other important occasions."
4. How might this passage from Hays help us understand this passage in light of our culture? What analogs might there be between the temples in Corinth and our culture/society?
5. In v. 1 Paul writes: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." What is the "knowledge" Paul is talking about (hint: see v.4-6)? And what do you think he means by "puffed up"? In what ways can knowledge (theology, doctrine, etc.) "puff" us up? Have you seen this in your life?
6. What damage was the knowledge that puffed them up doing to their life together (see vv.7-12)?

7. What commitment does Paul make in v. 13? How is this is a demonstration of Paul to “choose love” over knowledge?
8. How can we “choose love” in our lives together? What challenges lie in this passage to improve our life together? What would our community group/church/ neighborhood if we chose love over being puffed up and chose love over self?
9. If desired, **read the Companion Handout together**. What stands to you as significant or helpful?

PRAYER:

Spend some time together in prayer. In the early weeks, this can be a challenge for a group just getting to know one another. You may elect to just lead the group in a closing prayer, pray together as a large group, or break into smaller groups to pray. You can share requests, or simply pray about the things you discussed tonight.

COMPANION HANDOUT

True knowledge is a great grace of God. Knowledge without love is an illusion. (Hugh Palmer)

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Knowledge is defective if it fails to build up the community. (Richard Hays)

Every congregation will profit from looking at themselves in the mirror of 1 Corinthians 8 and asking whether there are ways in which they are using knowledge as a weapon rather than as an instrument of love. Whether Bible-thumping certainty about revealed truth, or serene confidence in the latest scientific findings, or passionate discernment of the “right social causes, any “knowledge” that divides the community and causes the knowledgable ones to despise those who are ignorant or uncertain is not being used in the service of God. (Richard Hays)

...the exclusive lordship of Jesus stands as a challenge to many arrangements that we take for granted. If Jesus is Lord then Caesar is not, and any form of nationalism can turn into a form of idolatry. (Richard Hays)

...perhaps the most insidious form of idolatry for churches in the United States is the idolatry of materialism. In the name of freedom and individual rights, Christians enmesh themselves in economic practices that draw their loyalty from Christ and divide the community of faith by disregarding the poor. (Richard Hays)

It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken...There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors...And our charity must be real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner—no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*)