



Week 14 | January 20 Sermon

Community: [Continued from last week and for the next few weeks]

This is a good season in which to start intentionally sharing stories together. No doubt you have at least picked up on bits and pieces of each other's stories as discussion and growth have taken place. Now it's time to be intentional, giving each individual significant time to share his/her story with the rest of the GROUP. This can include as much or as little as any given person is comfortable sharing. As leaders, model this by going first! Consider establishing a "schedule" so that each person knows when it will be his/her turn and can come prepared. This will take you several weeks and will be the focus of our community time together between now and Lent. Here are some key points to consider when sharing:

When people tell their faith stories, five things appear over and over again—five things God uses to grow our faith. They're ways of recognizing how God is already involved in each of our lives. It's a great way for you to think through your own story.

Practical Teaching Studying the Bible and listening to sermons make Scripture seem alive and relevant in our daily lives. They show us who God is, who we are, and who God wants us to be.

Providential Relationships God uses the people in our lives to influence us in extraordinary ways. He speaks to us through others—whether lifelong friends or short-term acquaintances. Even difficult relationships can be used by God for our good.

Private Disciplines Things like prayer, personal time reading the Bible, fasting, and solitude deepen our relationship with God. They get our hearts in synch with His.

Personal Ministry Jesus showed us that we find life by giving our lives away. When we serve others. We are privileged to partner with God in what he's doing in the lives of those we serve.

Pivotal Circumstances When big things happen, good or bad, they change the way we interact with God. Circumstances often cause us to pay attention to what He's doing in our lives.

As you think about your own story, consider how the five things have played a part in your journey with God. You don't have to talk about all five things, but chances are there are significant things to be shared within at least one or two of these categories to let your GROUPIES get to know the real you.

"Community" by Andy Stanley

Auditorium Discussion Questions::

What has it been like to be challenged to root out prejudice, favoritism, & racism, just as Peter & the community were challenged to do in this story?

What are you learning about the beauty & brokenness of your ethnicity?

What is a next step you are taking to grow in your understanding of your own ethnic story? Or the historic roots of racism and systemic injustice in our country and in the church?

Imagine a diverse, reconciled, and unified church here in Pella...What Kingdom impact could that have as we seek to be His witnesses?

What spiritual disciplines could you practice to cultivate an open, humble and receptive heart to the Holy Spirit so that we can recognize correction and conviction when it comes?

Sanctuary Discussion Questions::

Please read Acts 11:1-18. What does the Holy Spirit draw your attention to? Why?

Acts 11:1-3 reveals that the Jerusalem church was shocked, offended and angry by Peter's words and deeds. Why was this so?

What role did racism, favoritism and prejudice play?

What role did spiritual warfare play?

Kevin suggested that Acts 9-11 repeats what church history reveals: theology emerges from ministry, not the other way around. Do you agree/disagree? Why?

The services ended with an invitation to repent of favoritism, prejudice, and bigotry: Do you need to repent? If so, where?

Will you spend time praying for each other and Third Church? Pray that we will be known for our love for Jesus and others (including those different from us).

*Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. **Hebrews 10:24-25***

GROUPS