

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 16th February 2014

THEME: IDENTITY IN CHRIST – MY SELF IMAGE

As we Gather

The reading this week highlights our attitude to self, others and Christ / God

Reading Scripture **LUKE 18 : 9 – 14**

Thinking together

Prayer had an important place in the life of the devout Jew. Prayers were said three times daily, and were thought to be especially effective if said in the Temple (the centre of payer life).

Do you have a special time and place for prayer? Discuss

Do you pray at other times, in other places? Discuss

Not all prayer is genuine, as our attitude will affect how we pray and what we pray for. Consider the two prayers in this week's reading

What do these two prayers tell us about each man? Discuss

Self-righteousness grows out of seeking to justify self by comparison with others. Any religion / religious practice based on merit results in self-righteousness and pride. Pride prevents the individual from being able to learn anything from God. Righteousness is a gift of God's grace.

To whom was the Pharisee praying – what was he praying for? Discuss

To whom was the tax-collector praying – what was he praying for? Discuss

In Luke 18:13 we read that the tax collector stood at a distance and did not even look upwards.

What does this tell you about how he felt in relation to God? Discuss

What is your attitude (mental and spiritual) as you approach God? Discuss

True prayer comes from setting our lives beside the life of God as revealed in Christ.

When you examine your life, the temptation is to compare yourself to others - in the church, family, friends, in the community

How do you feel when you do this? Discuss

When you compare your lifestyle with the example / teachings / commands of Christ

How does this make you feel? Discuss

Humility develops through growing a vital / dynamic relationship with Christ, in which / through which we learn what it means to –

- Leave retaliation to God (Matt 5:38-42)
- Love by choice and overcome evil by love (Matt 5:43-48)
- Forgive daily, and allow God to guide our forgiving (Matt 13:21-35)
- Avoid seeking public recognition and promoting self / ministry (Luke 14:7-11)

In Closing

We need to recognise and acknowledge sin in our lives in order to be restored to godliness.

We have to humble ourselves before God's will and way, recognising the danger of pride and arrogance.