

Fruit of the Spirit

Pursue Joy

Welcome/Prayer

IceBreaker

Communication Challenge

Give everyone a number. They have to arrange themselves in numerical order by communicating with each other without speaking or holding up fingers. They make up their own sub-language or sign-language and it often is pretty amusing. For Round Two, have people arrange themselves in order of birth or in calendar months.

Discussion

Scripture: Psalm 68:3-4, 95:1-2, 100:1; Luke 15 (the three parables); John 15:8-11; Philippians 1:4

- When is the last time you can remember having pure joy in your life? What brought joy to your life this week? Why was it so joyful?
- What are the markers of someone full of joy?
 - How are their lives different than others?
- Where can you see joy in action within Scripture? (be specific)
- Take a look at John 15.
 - What is God's reaction to those "things" which were lost?
 - Why is this significant?
 - If God's life is marked by such joy, how can the lives of those who are called to embody God's joy be any less joyful?
- How can our "joy be made complete"? (John 15: 8-11)
- What robs us of this "complete" joy?
- What does the world tell us we need to be happy?
 - Is there a difference between happiness and joy? What is it?
 - Why do we fall into this trap?
- How do we go about loosening the "joy control" of the world on our lives?
 - What does this type of joy look like in our lives?
- What must we do to allow God's joy to become ruler of our life?
 - How is this "complete" joy manifested in our lives? (The Psalms passages)
 - How do we show joy in all parts of our life? (the good, the bad and the ugly)
- How will others be able to see this difference in our lives and the life of the congregation?

Take it With You Question

Reflect on the way you begin most days. What typically happens in the first ten minutes of your days? In the first hour? Do your mind and your energies, like those of most of us; turn immediately to the concerns and the pressures of the day ahead? If so, joy may be a hard fruit to find and pursue. This week instead of starting the day with angst, spend a few quiet moments reflecting and giving thanks to God for the simple joys of the day. In the evening reflect on what God has done for you in the day and rest in the joy of God's continual actions.

Closing:

Final Prayer