

LIFE Group Leader Handout

June 9, 2019

What's the Point?

Rev. Eric Targe

Scripture--Ecclesiastes 2 (verses 24-26 shown)

24 There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, 25 for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? 26 For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

Main Idea--Take it from Solomon: Pursue the Lord As the Only Worthy Pursuit

Is the American Dream a worthy pursuit for young people or those of any age?

- Striving after pleasure is meaningless—not comedy, not wine, nor buildings, nor pleasure. (1-11) At this point in Solomon's life, it was all about him, not God. Yes pleasure is a good thing, but if it becomes a God thing, it becomes an evil thing.
- Striving after wisdom is better than foolishness, but does not spare us from vanity. (12-17)
- Possessions we toil after will be owned by another. Workaholism is vanity. (18-23)

V. 25 Solomon looks “over the sun.” Live to please God by fearing him and trusting Christ for our future.

Application--

- Can you think of a person who had much wealth, or fame, or pleasure whose life ended badly testifying to the truth of Solomon's complaint that all is vanity?
- What “under the sun” experiences have you chased in the past that you found to be vanity?
- How does the futility of what the world touts as good give us opportunity to share about Jesus with those around us?

Serve With Your Group This Summer

Suzie Nicolosi

Summer is finally upon us and we are busy making plans, filling our schedules with graduation parties, pool parties, BBQs and vacations. As your group winds down for the summer, if you haven't already done so, I want to draw your attention to an important aspect of small group life that you can continue throughout the summer, even when you are not meeting regularly... SERVING!

Serving together is a great opportunity to share in ministry, but it needs to be intentional. As we develop strong relationships in our small groups there is a danger that we can become internally focussed and we need an output. Serving is a spiritual discipline that helps foster an "others-focused" mindset and slowly deteriorates the selfish parts of the heart that keep us "me-focused." Serving alongside one another strengthens our relationships and gives expression to our faith and heart for God. Many ICC LIFE groups have served together over the year and I know you will testify to this!

Doing service projects together as a small group is an **effective** and **necessary** element to building a solid spiritual community. Yes, fostering passion within your group for doing service projects is challenging. Yes, creating missional experiences can demand careful planning. Yes, getting a commitment from your group members can make you want to pull your hair out. But... the benefits of serving together greatly outweigh the negatives. If you haven't already read it, I strongly encourage you to read this week's trending article on the website, written by Pastor Joe, "Why is Christian Service Unique?"

We have a variety of opportunities this summer where you and your group can plug in to serve. Go to islandchristian.com/community-serving to learn more about community service projects this month - a blood drive, prayer walks, yard work & painting. Prayer walks are a great way to bring your group together. Even if our planned times don't work for you, there's nothing preventing you from organizing one (or more) with your group over the summer.

Love kids? Why not get involved in Summer Promised Land/Sunday School or help at one of our camps! More information about serving at the camps can be found at islandchristian.com/summer

I recently read an article on the small group page of Emmanuel Church, in Indiana. It highlighted 5 benefits of serving together as a group:

SERVING TOGETHER WILL LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD: *In order for a group to be healthy, we must see one another as equals. All of us are "one under Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28) Service projects help instill this principle as a reality when we all experience it the same way.*

SERVING TOGETHER ALLOWS GROUP MEMBERS TO REALIZE AND EXERCISE THEIR GIFTING: *In 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul explains that every one of us is gifted in some way for the purpose of building God's kingdom. Doing service projects together will change the perspective of those in your group who may feel like their gifts or abilities are not needed in a small group setting. (i.e. carpentry, plumbing, electrician, etc.)*

SERVING TOGETHER ENHANCES THE CREDIBILITY OF THE CHURCH: *When a group goes out to serve others, their church becomes known in the community as a church that doesn't just talk about loving others but actually "loves in deed and in truth." (1 John 3:18) Serving together adds credibility to the life and message of Jesus, and draws people into relationship with Him.*

SERVICE TURNS A GROUP INTO A COMMUNITY: *If a small group is going to turn the corner and become a community of believers, the group members must have common stories from shared experiences. Stories that evoke laughter, tears and a sense of pride flow freely after a group has joined hands in accomplishing a service project together.*

SERVING TOGETHER PRODUCES SPIRITUAL GROWTH: *Guiding group members into all aspects of the faith journey is vital in taking someone from a spiritual baby to a mature believer. Those who are mature live out the Great Commandment of “love God, love others” in a consistent fashion. Consistently caring for the needs of others is an essential part of this process.*

What are we waiting for???