



ENGAGING - EVANGELISM - EXPOSITION - EDIFICATION - EQUIPPING - EXALTATION

Stromlo Christian Church Life Groups 2018

Term 1

Our Mission is to be a 'Christ-Centred Community of Disciple-Making Disciples in Molonglo and beyond'. As we seek to do this, we feel there are a number of things that we value (or that are part of the 'DNA makeup' of our church) that contribute to this mission being achieved. These are:

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| 1. Our DNA #1: Engaging | 1 Peter 2:11-17, 3:8-18 |
| 2. Our DNA #2: Evangelism | 2 Cor 5:11-21 |
| 3. Our DNA #3: Exposition | 2 Tim 3:10-4:5 |
| 4. Our DNA #4: Edification | Hebrews 10:19-25 |
| 5. Our DNA #5: Equipping | Eph 4:1-16 |
| 6. Our DNA #6: Exaltation | Psalms 30 |

Our DNA #1: Engaging (with our world) 1 Peter 2:11-17, 3:8-18

Intro question to whole series:

1. Imagine (if you can) that you have never been to church before. You attend Stromlo one Sunday. What things would you notice as unique about Stromlo?
(This question is aimed towards promoting discussion of Stromlo's core 'values' – the things that we value in particular in our church life together. For example, we value the week-by-week 'exposition' of scripture; we value the priesthood of all believers and all of our involvement in various ministries i.e. 'equipping')

Intro question to this study:

2. 'Christians should be *in* the world but not *of* the world'. Discuss.

Pray

Read 1 Peter 2:11-17

3. How does Peter describe believers? How does he describe non-believers?
4. What should characterize believer's behaviour towards non-believers? Why?

Read 1 Peter 3:8-18

5. How does Peter further describe believers and their behavior towards non-believers?
6. Being a Christian is scary sometimes, especially when we are made fun of. *Why* don't we need to be frightened of this or worse (v. 14)? Hint: see Peter's quote of Psalm 34 in v. 10-12.
7. What should we always 'be prepared' to do (v. 15)?

Think it through

8. What characterizes your behaviour and speech before others at the moment?
9. Are you 'engaged' with any non-believers at the moment? Spend a few minutes sharing and praying with one another the names of friends, family, or workmates with whom you are seeking to engage for the sake of the gospel.

Our DNA # 2: Evangelism (of the lost) 2 Cor 5:11-21

Intro question:

1. What do you find hard about evangelism? Why? Or...
2. What motivates you to get things done in life/at work/school/uni?

Pray

Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

A note about context: 2 Corinthians is a letter Paul wrote to a church that had (to some extent) lost confidence in Paul's ministry and leadership. Notice how Paul defends himself and calls on the Corinthians to see him rightly (especially v. 12-13).

3. Note down any questions or comments you have about these verses, and feel free to discuss these briefly.
4. Paul says that he is 'compelled' to do something in v. 14. What is he compelled to do (see especially v. 19b-20)?
5. Why is he 'compelled' to do it? In other words, what is Paul's motivation for this activity?
6. What difference does 'the message of reconciliation' make to human lives?

Think it through

7. Do you feel compelled to do what Paul feels compelled to do? Why/why not?

Getting practical about evangelism

8. Spend 5 minutes reflecting on the difference Jesus makes to your life, and come up with a 1-2 sentence summary (i.e. if Jesus wasn't in your life, how would it be different?). Practice sharing this in pairs.
9. Share with the whole group a person who you would like to share 'the message of reconciliation' with this year. Spend some time praying for them together.

Our DNA # 3: Exposition (of the Word) 2 Tim 3:10-4:5

Intro question:

1. Share with each other your favorite book or author, and why.

Pray

Read 2 Timothy 3:1-4:8

2. Summarise in one or two sentences the kind of people ('these teachers'; 3:8) that Paul describes in 3:1-9 and 4:3-4.
3. How should Timothy be different from these people (v. 3:10-4:5)? Summarise what should characterize Timothy's life in contrast to these people.
4. How does Paul describe the 'Holy Scriptures' in v. 14-17?

Note: the word often translated 'God-breathed' is *theopneustos* (theos: 'God', and pnein: 'to breathe'). Paul here is arguing about the *source* of scripture, not so much the *manner* of how scripture came about (i.e. it comes from God and carries his authority, but it was not dictated word-for-word from heaven, like the Islamic Koran is claimed to be).

5. What role does/should the Bible play in Timothy's life? Why?

Think it through

6. What role does/should the Bible play in your life? Why?
7. At Stromlo (and many other Christian churches) our service includes a dedicated 'sermon', where a preacher 'exposes' the scriptures week-by-week, chapter-by-chapter (rather than 'cherry-picking' verses, or simply telling us his general opinion). In light of 2 Timothy 3:14-17, why do you think we do this?
 - a. Can you think of any other bible passages which might support or imply the importance of this practice (e.g. Eph 2:20; 2 Pet 1:20-21)?
8. Spend some time reading Ps 119 (v. 1-48), reflecting, and praying together that you would not only submit to the Holy Scriptures, but also *cherish* them.

Our DNA # 4: Edification (of the Body) Heb 10:19-25

Intro question:

1. 'I don't need to go to church on Sunday. I get my spiritual encouragement from listening to Tim Keller sermons online. Besides, I've found church unenjoyable'. How would you respond to this comment?

Pray

Read Hebrews 10:11-25

2. Given v. 11-18, what is the 'Therefore' (v. 19) there for (i.e. what argument is the author making so far)?
3. What has Jesus achieved for us (v. 19-21)?
4. What are we urged to do in response (v. 22-25)?
5. What does the author urge us to do in v. 24-25, and how is it connected to what he has said in v. 19-23? In other words, what does 'stirring one another up to love and good works' and 'not neglecting meeting together' (v. 24-25) have to do with having 'full assurance of faith' and 'holding fast to hope' (v. 22-23)?
6. Why do you think the author considers it so important to 'meet together'?

Think it through

7. What is church for? Why do you attend Stromlo on Sundays? Why are you part of this Life Group?
8. Spend a few minutes brainstorming ('considering') how you as a Life Group can 'stir up one another to love and good works'.

' This may seem like a confusing question, but the answer is critical to understanding the passage, and thus understanding the importance of *gathering* as Christians (whether on Sunday, or during the week). The author actually connects our individual assurance and ability to persevere as Christians with the specific act of *gathering* (not neglecting – literally 'abandoning', a very intense word, and the same word Jesus uses when he cries out 'My God my God why have you *forsaken* me' on the Cross). Besides, how else can we be spurred on to 'love and good deeds' apart from in the context of the Christian gathering?

Our DNA # 5: Equipping (to serve) Eph 4:1-16

Intro question:

1. What do you think is the main job of a church pastor? Why?

Pray

Read Ephesians 4:1-16

2. Summarise in one sentence Paul's main idea in v. 1-6.
3. Summarise in one sentence Paul's main idea in v. 7-13.
 - a. Create a diagram or draw a picture which captures v. 1-13.
4. Who does Jesus 'give' to the church in v. 11?
5. What are these people called to do in verse 12?
6. Who does 'the work of ministry' in verse 12?
7. What is the 'work of ministry' (see context: v. 12-16, but also back to v. 2-3)?²

Think it through

8. How have these verses changed the way you think about church pastors?
About yourself?
9. Do you feel like you are 'in ministry'? Do you feel that you are currently playing an active role in doing 'the work of ministry' at Stromlo? Why/why not?
10. What practical steps might you (or others in your life) be able to take to see you equipped and excited to 'minister' to others?

²The word translated 'ministry' is *diakonia*. This is a rather ordinary word that simply means something like 'service'. It does not carry the weight that the word 'ministry' often carries in our circles (i.e. vocational paid full-time ministry).

Our DNA # 6: Exaltation (of Christ)

Psalm 30

Intro question:

1. Who tends to get 'exaltation' (adoration, admiration) in our Australian culture? Why do you think that is?
2. Listen to Sons of Korah's version of 'Psalm 30' (YouTube or Spotify).

Pray

Read Psalm 30

3. How does the overall Psalm make you feel?
4. Why does David 'extol' (רוּם – *rum*; literally 'to lift up/make high') the Lord (v. 1-3, 11-12)?
5. What does David tell us ('you his saints') to do in v. 4, and why?
6. Read Eph 2:1-10. What parallels to David's predicament can you see? How does our situation compare to David's?
7. Give Psalm 30 a song title (summarise the Psalm in 4-5 words).

Think it through

8. What's the point of 'exalting' Christ? Why do you think we praise him, and what does it 'do' to us (i.e. how is it good for us)?
9. Are there any things in your life other than God that are attracting your adoration and exaltation, and which you need to repent of? If appropriate, share these with your group, or with a member of the group who you trust. Spend a minute in quiet reflection and confession to God.
10. If possible, finish by singing a song together. If stuck for song suggestions, try singing 'In Christ Alone'.