

PILGRIM HOME CHURCH

The smaller groups in our church community are inside our homes where we go deeper, build friendships, and walk out the Christian life with each other.

HOME CHURCH GUIDE

- + “Breaking the Ice” question (group facilitator)
- + **CHECK-INS:** Introduce, check-in
- + **CARE:** Needs in the group
- + **COMPASSION:** What is the group planning? Are you inviting your neighbours to join in?
- + **GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS** Church-wide, group-only
- + **DIG IN:** Discuss questions as a group
- + **END AND HOMEWORK:** Final questions, prayer huddles for personal requests. Consider breaking into small groups (huddles) of 2-4, by gender, if large enough.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- + What activity do you easily get “caught up” into? Why? What do you like about it? How does it affect you when you are outside of the activity?
- + Re-read some of the key Bible passages in this teaching.
- + Talk about the distinction between pretense and play. How do you see pretense as damaging to the life of Christian, particularly in worship and prayer?
- + Grow up/become like a child is a New Testament tension. How does one hold these things together?
- + Some have spoken of the “juvenilization of worship” in the church as a very bad thing. In light of David’s dancing, Jesus’ rejoicing in the Spirit, and the New Testament tension between being “caught up” and “sober-minded,” what do you make of this?
- + What is your greatest fear of “letting your guard down” in worship and other “common grace” acts of play (art, sport, etc)?

PRAYER REQUESTS:

May 19, 2019

PILGRIM CHURCH LESSONS IN THE FIRE

EMPOWERING PLAY: ART, SPORT, AND WORSHIP

“God plays. God creates playing. And man should play if he is to live as humanly as possible and to know reality, since it is created by God’s playfulness.”
-Medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas

Growing up in the church I learned the most forming aspects of worship and preaching occurred when those leading had that sense of play. They invited others into their experience of God in worship, prayers, preaching.

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE

2 Samuel 6:9-23

A Modern Returning Leper Story

PRETENSE OR PLAY?

- + Pretense is lying to ourselves (and trying to fool others). Deception for the sake of face/appearance
- + Play is an actual state of being we enter by lowering walls and unhealthy inhibitions
- + THIS IS A CRUCIAL DISTINCTION

MORE BIBLICAL LESSONS

- + Grow Up OR Become Childlike?
 - + *Ephesians 4:15, Hebrews 5:12-14*
 - + *1 Corinthians 13:8-13, Matthew 18:2-3*

PERFORMANCE OR PLAY?

+ Performance or entertainment tends to have strong lines between a person or group leading and a much more passive group. Performance/Entertainment is the most passive, requiring the least of the other, essentially making them a non-player observing.

+ There is a role for this, but it usually does not have the same transformative/empowering effect, because our engagement with the art/sport is optional.

+ Eg. you can look at a painting and move on. Watch a game and move on.

+ You can get more absorbed or caught up, but it's not required. However, if you are in the game or painting, etc., you are required to engage as a performer.

+ Performing can lead to actual play if "self" and "other" awareness is allowed to shift/lessen.

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day when I heard..." *Revelation 1:10*

+ Being "caught up"

+ *Acts 16:25-34*

+ *Exodus 36:5*

+ *2 Corinthians 12:2-3*

+ *John 12:3-4,5*

+ *Luke 10:38-42*

+ Others...

Matthew 18:2-3 He called a little child to him and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

For a child, the whole of life is a game. People who are not open to play cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. -Jacques Suurmond, 48-49.

WHAT IS PLAY?

+ An altered state of being where time, emotions, even use of the body is different than non-play

+ Common Grace play

+ Play of the Kingdom of God

+ Meditative and Active (Contemplative and Charismatic)

+ Structured and unstructured

+ "Thin place"

+ "[Play] refers to any activity done for the joy of doing it and not for a performative, competitive, functionalistic, rationalistic, or utilitarian reasons. Theologically speaking, play is the joy of God in which we participate" Wolfgang Vondey 13.

+ Play involves freedom and order that allows the players to enter a space where they can thrive independent of non-play life and circumstances. In that thriving, they are liberated and empowered. Speaking in tongues is perhaps the freest form of play possible. 30 "Within the world of play, new understandings of life are discovered, new relationships are forged, we return from the world of play better able to deal with the challenge of ordinary 'living'" Simon Chan, 117.

WHAT HINDERS PLAY?

+ Taking yourself too seriously and a lack of joy.

+ Leaders who don't play--who do not practice Sabbath: rest, worship, study, delight.

+ Not understanding the relationship between non-play (work, struggle, fight) and play (delight)

+ Exclusion

+ Fear of the unknown and entering a holy experience.

+ Addiction to game

FINAL THOUGHT

What to do or learn?

+ Embrace 'play' as a theological word and practice with a direct connection to effective prayer, the stirring up of Spiritual gifts and authentic (non-performance) worship.

+ Leaders MUST...

+ Play is part of flourishing and coming alive...

Luke 10:21 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.