

40***days of community***What on earth
are *we* here for?

What Matters Most

Introduction to 40 Days of Community

In 40 Days of Purpose we answered the question, "What on earth am *I* here for?"; in 40 Days of Community we will answer the question, "What on earth are *we* here for?". The fulfillment of God's purposes for our lives works better together, than alone. So, it is appropriate, as we begin, that we underscore what matters most, which is love. In the study questions this week, you will think about why love is the most important thing in life. Without it, nothing else matters. As this topic is addressed in your 40 Days of Community ABFs next week, the reasons for making love our highest priority will be taught on and discussed. This will lay the foundation for discovering God's 5 purposes for our lives together, and provide a launching pad for taking God's love to the world

around us. The first reason love is so important, is that without it, nothing I say will matter. As they say, "talk is cheap", but real love "puts our money where our mouth is". Secondly, without love, nothing I know will matter. People don't care how much we know, until they know how much we care. And then, without love, nothing I believe will matter. One's Christian faith is only intellectual belief unless it makes us *act* differently towards those around us. Also, if we don't live a life of love, nothing we give will matter. Sometimes giving has a selfish motive; but true love gives, expecting nothing in return. Finally, nothing we accomplish will matter. Few people on their death bed talk about what they have ac-



**Discovering God's purposes
for our lives works
better together**

complished; they talk about the people that they care about in life. So, love matters most; but what is love? The Bible tells us that love is a command; it is not optional. Also, love is not just a feeling that we "fall" into, it is a choice that willfully make. We must choose to go after a life of love. Love is also conduct—it is what we do. Finally, love is a commitment—we are to keep on loving, no matter what. Love is what matters most.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

Study Questions for Next Week

(Use as a companion to the "Better Together" devotional guide)

Day 1—Read 1 John 4:11. Why is God's love the starting point for real community?

Day 2—Read John 13:34. In your own words, what does it mean to truly love someone, and what does it require?

What Matters Most—Study Questions

Day 3—Read 1 John 4:20b. How does loving others show that we love God, and how do you measure up in this area?

Day 4—Read 1 John 3:14. Why is our love for other believers the evidence that we belong to God's family? Is that true for you?

Day 5—Read 1 Peter 2:17. How does being in a spiritual family teach us to love, and how can you experience this?

Day 6—Read Hebrews 6:11. Why is loving here on earth great preparation for eternity? How can you love more urgently, consistently and expectantly?

Day 7—Read John 13:35. Why is our love for one another such a powerful testimony to the world that Jesus is the answer?

Scripture to Remember

"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

John 13:35 NLT

Celebration Fellowship

*Reaching—
Restoring—Raising Up*

We're on the web

www.celebrationnet.com

Life Group Questions—Exodus 19

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. What kind of preparations do you make when especially important people are coming over to your house? Why do we do this?
2. Why does remembering God's faithfulness prepare us to encounter Him? Name some ways He has been faithful to you.
3. Talk about the meaning of God's vision for His people as a "royal priesthood". How does this prepare us to experience God's presence?
4. Discuss the importance of connecting with our "community of faith" to be able to encounter God genuinely. What keeps you from doing that?
5. Which of the things for inward spiritual preparation—commitment of time, taking inventory, or praying—do you need clarity on, or do you need to do most?
6. Go around the room and name one or two things that you will do to prepare to meet with God this week. Pray for each other's commitments.