

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

We are not spiritual consumers; we are spiritual contributors. The church does not exist for us, we exist for the world. Jesus has sent us to help people find their way back to God.

SCRIPTURE

John 20:21, Philippians 2:3-4, Acts 1:1-9, Galatians 6:9

ICEBREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT

1. What is your favorite thing to eat?
2. As Christ-followers, we want to be spiritual contributors, not just spiritual consumers. Consider the following statement by Pope Francis: “Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is...Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you.” What do you think of this statement? Can you share a time your joy was increased because you contributed to the joy of others?

BIBLE DISCUSSION

3. Read Philippians 2:3-4. When you think of those living out this verse, what are they doing?
4. Read Acts 1:1-9. What do these passages say about the power of the Holy Spirit?
5. Read Galatians 6:9. What insight does this give you into our role as contributors?
6. John 20:21. How do you interpret this in light of the quote by Pope Francis?

LIFE APPLICATION

7. Describe the spaces where you live, work, neighborhood, school. Which lens do you most often see them through, consumer or contributor?
8. Georgetown University Professor Abigail Marsh researched altruism by studying altruistic kidney donors, who donated a kidney to a stranger. She noted three characteristics that can help us as we strive to grow our capacities as contributors:
 - a. **Selfless:** They were incredibly humble. They didn't think they were unusually compassionate or extraordinarily generous; they just saw themselves “at the right place at the right time”. Share a memory when you were “at the right place at the right time”. How do you think being intentional and present might increase or decrease those opportunities?
 - b. **Set Apart:** Their amygdala was 8% larger than normal brains. Statistically, this set them apart from the rest of the population, allowing them to be more empathetic than the average person. As Christians, we receive that “set apart-ness” from the Holy Spirit. Share a time when you were empowered by the Holy Spirit to do something you didn't think possible.
 - c. **Steady:** They had all come to the extreme choice of donating a kidney to a stranger through lots of baby steps, smaller acts of kindness that grew their capacity. Where to you feel yourself on that continuum? How do you think smaller acts of kindness lead to larger ones?
9. Jesus' contributor attitude came from knowing he was sent into this world for a purpose. To paraphrase John 4:34, Jesus says, what fills me is to fill others. Do you have a sense of how God is asking you to live into this purpose? How is God asking you to contribute to the world around you?

CHALLENGE

What intentional way will you contribute to the place where you live this week? Share with the group what the Holy Spirit is bringing to your mind. Pray as a group for the courage to live out this purpose over the next week. Commit to holding each other accountable next week.