



Passionate About Emptying



{Discover & Discuss}

Opening: Cultures around the world, even in our own country, vary widely on a number of topics including values, dress, food, music, authority structure, etc. Have two or three people start by sharing a funny or interesting story of visiting a foreign culture or interacting with someone in/from another culture.

{Read Philippians 2:1-4} Although the church in Philippi seemed to be settled into an orthodox participation in the Gospel (v. 1); there was still more important work to be done in building their church culture. Stop for minute and talk about the importance of building and maintaining a healthy church culture: Is it even possible to build a healthy culture? Who in the church is responsible for this building and maintaining? What will happen if the culture of Harvest Columbus or your small group is compromised by selfishness or self-glory?

Make a list of things you can do to help build a healthy, Biblical church culture.

Jesus had clear priorities for the church; read John 13:34-35 and 17:21. Love and unity are easier said than done. In the message, four important aspects of a healthy relational culture were mentioned from verse 2: Which of the four would you say is most difficult for you to consistently demonstrate in your own life?

{Read Philippians 2:5-8} Paul said that we are to have the mind of Christ in us: What do you find most amazing about the example of Christ from these verses?

In verse 5, we are told that this mind (or attitude) is available to us in Christ; by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are able (and required) to access this attitude by virtue of our relationship with Christ. In the most difficult or painful situations, we can love and serve our brothers and sisters in Christ because we are in Christ and empowered by His Spirit.

We are told that Christ “made himself nothing” (literally “emptied Himself”) and then “humbled himself”: How are we to empty ourselves in order to bless others? The message mentioned that we are to do this by “divesting me of me; and investing me in others”. Talk about practical ways you can do this in your small group this year. Humility can be a tricky thing to live out practically: we know when it is absent, but how and when should we as believers humble ourselves on a daily basis? Give some examples of ways we can work on “making less of ourselves or lowering ourselves.”

{Read Philippians 2:9-11} Nothing is greater than experiencing the favor and approval of God. Share one example of a time when you chose to humble or empty yourself and God blessed or honored you? Furthermore, how can our church experience the blessing and favor of God corporately?

{Care & Accountability}

From Last Week: Did you practice sharing your Story (testimony) and Map (Romans 6:23)? Do you have a strong enough grasp on both of these to share them with a friend? If not, keep working at them.

This Week: Ask the following questions to each other:

Where is God calling you to step up and influence the spirit and culture in our church?

Is there anyone you need to forgive in our church family or is there someone you need to go to and ask for their forgiveness?

The work of God depends on faithful disciples giving of themselves on a weekly basis; where are you serving in our church family right now? Or if you are not yet participating, make a decision to step up this week and find a place to minister to our church family. Is there anything holding you back?

{Take It Home...}

Take 5 minutes each day and ask God to make Harvest Columbus a healthy and Christ-exalting church. Pray for each disciple to embrace a culture of emptying, humility, and raise the status of others.