

Life Group Topic #43
An Unhurried Life
Zephaniah 3:12-17

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

Imagine that this Christmas you are living in a part of the world that does not celebrate Christmas at all (like a good number of the missionaries @ SAC). What would you miss the most?

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Read Zephaniah 3:12-17

If there is one emotion that springs to the surface at Christmas, it is JOY. The shepherds were not expecting it, but they were surprised by joy. This was a joy imbedded in the news that a Saviour had come who would free us from all that had formally blockaded us from the presence of God.

The prophet Zephaniah speaks of this joy. He reminds us that God Immanuel has come to us; to save us; to delight in us. He has come to quiet us with his love and rejoice over us with singing. If only we would stop to listen.

The problem is that many of us do miss it. Ironically, the very season meant to quiet us in the love of God demonstrated to us in the incarnate Jesus, is the season where we are often the most distracted.

We suffer today from what is sometimes called "hurry sickness." Meyer Friedman defined it as, "a continuous struggle and unremitting attempt to accomplish or achieve more and more things....in less and less time, frequently in the face of opposition, real or imagined, from other persons." Does that describe your life?

We must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives. This does not mean we will never be busy. Jesus often had much to do, but he never did it in a way that severed the life-giving connection between him and the Father. He never did it in a way that interfered with his ability to genuinely love. He observed a regular practice of withdrawing from activity for the sake of solitude and prayer. Jesus was often busy, but never hurried.

Hurry is not just a disordered schedule. Hurry is a disordered heart.

One of the effects of hurry-sickness is "sunset fatigue." Sunset fatigue is when you are just too tired, or too drained, or too pre-occupied to love the people to whom we

have made the deepest promises. In fact because it kills love, hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life. Hurry prevents us from receiving love from the Father or giving it to his children. (Read again Zeph: 3:17)

Word Application Questions:

1. Consider the following symptoms of hurry-sickness. Do you see them in yourself?
 - Constantly speeding up daily activities (running yellow lights!)
 - Multi-tasking (doing or thinking more than 1 thing at a time)
 - Superficiality (lots of information but no wisdom)
 - An inability to love (sunset fatigue)
2. What practices might help us out of hurry-sickness?
3. How can we find solitude in our lives like Jesus did?
4. Consider the rapid advance of Christmas. How could you practice “slowing” this Christmas?
5. Consider together how to take hold of the prophet’s promise, “He will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”

Consider reading these WONDERFUL books this Christmas season on this topic of the unhurried life:

1. *The Life You’ve Always Wanted* by John Ortberg
2. *The Rest of God* by Mark Buchanan

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolding those we reach into the Life Group.