



small groups

Discussion Guide



Becoming Connected

John 13

Ice Breaker

(10 minutes)

Discuss

- Andy mentioned some friends named Bob and Jane who came to the hospital when his daughter Bonnie was born prematurely. When was the last time you were in a hospital waiting room? Tell your group about the situation and take a moment to pray for those who were affected by it.
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Lesson Review

(30 minutes)

Read John 13

This passage details Jesus' last night of freedom. Within 24 hours, he would be dead.

Discuss

- How did Jesus choose to spend the last night of his life? How else might he have spent it? What is significant about his choice?
- In a Bible with section titles, read the titles for John chapters 14-17. Almost all of those four chapters are the words of Jesus. Based on the section titles, what was on Jesus' mind during his final night with his disciples? What themes do you see?

The following paragraph is from IBC's statement on the marks of a disciple:

Intimately Connected To a Few

Jesus showed an uncommon love toward everyone He encountered, but He had a special affection for His most intimate friends. Jesus and the disciples did "life together" and their companionship brought them all great joy in the face of sorrow, strength in the face of weakness, and courage in the face of adversity. Living lives devoted to the mission of God in the world requires trusted friends who are committed to presence, honesty and encouragement in the mutual pursuit of the Christ-like life. (Luke 6:13; Mark 9:2; John 11:5; Acts 2:46-47)

Andy talked about having "a happy few" with whom we are closely connected. He zeroed in on the three qualities in the last sentence of that paragraph: presence, honesty and encouragement.

Presence

Andy talked about having "a ministry of presence" which is something IBC's Stephen Ministers study in training about how to care for hurting people. Andy said, "You can't overestimate how important it is to be there for your happy few."

Honesty

Other words that convey this idea are vulnerability and authenticity. This means confessing sin, which should be part of every small group. But it also means being honest about emotions and opinions. It means refusing to pose and posture.

Encouragement

This is especially important when life gets hard. Andy said his small group has been through death, divorce, and disease. And it was in those times that they needed one another most.

Discuss

- Which of those three is your group best at? Are you good at showing up? Are you unabashedly honest with one another? Are you good at encouraging and spurring one another on?
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Application

(20 minutes)

Andy offered two points of application: 1) Find your happy few and 2) Serve them for the purpose of helping them become like Jesus. Our presence, honesty and encouragement with one another should always be for the purpose of our growth in Christ. All of IBC's discipleship ministries are trying to produce the same thing: a circle of people whose purpose is to help one another live, love and serve like Jesus.

Discuss

- How have you helped one another live, love and serve like Jesus this session?
- What could you do differently toward that end?

Life Marks

As we move through this series, we'll be building a list of six characteristics of a mature disciple. Each week, we'll add another of these "life marks" to the list.

A mature disciple of Jesus is:

- Regularly engaged in time with the Father
- Wholly devoted to God's perfect will
- Graciously disposed toward all
- Intimately connected to a few

