

Cell Group material for week commencing 5/11/06

“ Life... is so dangerous that that only by submitting to some sort of discipline can we become equipped to live in any true sense”
Havelock Ellis

“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on however it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” Hebrews 12 v 11

There are 2 words in the NT which are translated as discipline. The first literally means “to save the mind”- it encourages us in soundness of mind and self control. The second word also translates as “chastisement “ or “nurture” and refers to the training and instruction of a child- which of course is both positive, encouraging and developing good behaviour and negative, dealing with wrong acts and attitudes.

Starter 1

Have you ever given something up for Lent (or another period of time). What was it? Why did you do it? What was hard about it and was there any benefit for you or others? If you never have done so what other experience of self –discipline (e.g. study or physical training) do you have?

Word 1

Before you come try and skim read 2 Samuel c1-10. What had David achieved by the end of chapter 10? What qualities enabled him to do so much?

Now read 2 Samuel 11v 1-15. Not a pretty story... the Bible does not gloss over the faults of God's people.

What went wrong? What “dark side” of David's character is revealed? Why do you think David failed so disastrously? And how does Uriah's behaviour contrast with David's?

“The world is full of alternative allegiances and the human heart is fickle... there remain “other gods” of great and tempting attractiveness and influence, most obviously money, sex and power”
How does this fit with Jesus saying that he came to give us life in all its fullness in John 10v10

What areas do you find it hard to maintain self discipline in? Remember there are more sorts of power over others than political- words alone have enormous potential for good or harm.

How can we help and encourage each other to train ourselves into a discipline of right thinking and living? Does Paul's description of Christian armour in Ephesians 6 10-18 give any help?

Worship

(or perhaps at an earlier stage!) You might want to thank God for what he has done in the past- both in your successes and your failures.

Starter 2

Can you remember a time you got into trouble as a child? How did it feel to be told off? Did it make you change?

Word 2

Read 2 Samuel 12 v 1-7a (remember it took place at least 7 months after c11 which explains why David did not get the point).

How would you have felt if you were David? What qualities did Nathan need to confront the king?

Why was it necessary for Nathan to act?

Discipline in this sense is not something that we like to think about – but what happens if no-one acts in bad situations?

Most of us do not like confrontation (except for those of us who like it too much!) – so how do we deal with a situation in the church when a fellow Christian is doing something wrong against us, others or what we believe to be God's rules?

Does Matthew 18 v 15-17 give us a pattern of how to handle this sort of situation and what our objectives should be? How would you apply it to (say) a cell group member who was pushing the “prosperity gospel”(the idea that all Christians have a right to every material blessing) or a fellow church member who is your next door neighbour but who keeps shouting at your children even when they are playing nicely (if nosily) in your garden?

Prayer

For any difficult situations you know of – and wisdom for those who are involved.

Notes for leaders

This has not been an easy one to prepare. You may find it deals with sensitive issues (especially the “money, sex and power bit”). Feel free to alter the material as needed and do not assume you have to deal with all the questions. You might find it useful to refocus part 2 on managing disagreements within cell.

The worship could fit in at another point if you felt it appropriate.