

TAKING IT HOME

8. All our lives, we focus on perfecting and practicing our words, both spoken and written. How much time should we spend on 'practicing our belief'? Name some ways you and family and friends can 'practice believing'.

9. Are your "confession and belief" sufficient for you, or do you feel you need more? How much of your belief is what you know, and how much is what you feel? Do you have to be able to explain it to have confidence in it?

10. This week, instead of confessing, try to profess *aloud* to God what you feel about Him.

PRAYER GUIDE

Praise & Thanksgiving:

Sugar River Praise Band

Pray for Healing:

Curt Johnson, cancer

Harold Morris, Carol Kendall's father, under hospice care

Diane Lukas, Jim Vanderpas

Pray for:

Each week we pray for a UMC from our district, this week:

Milton, their pastor Patrick Schultz and the 271 members.

Mary Kay Ogle, job search

Haiti earthquake victims and relief efforts

End to the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq
Victims of historic snow storms in Eastern US

Sugar River United Methodist Church SERMON OUTLINE for Sunday, February 14, 2010

Lips and Hearts Belief, Confession, and Love

Text: Romans 10:9-10

Pastor Gary Holmes

1. What Is Love?

Details to the Great Commandment to Love God and others.
1 Corinthians 13, Galatians 5:22-23

2. Belief (Heart) and Love

3. Confession (Lips) and Love

4. What is Faith...

Profess it and live it...until you got it.

What do we do with the days we have?

...how do we love?

GROWTH GUIDE – Sugar River UMC

For the week of February 14, 2010

This week we have two parts for our Growth Guide. Feel free to focus on one or integrate the two into your discussion and reflection. What is the connection between confession and love?

Part 1 - LOVE Guide

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Does the word LOVE bring to mind a special song, movie scene, work of art, or other image? What kind of love relationship do you envision?
2. Christianity uses the word 'love' a lot, in many ways, with many meanings. After hearing it for so long, how seriously do we take it?
3. It's easy to love people we like; Jesus tells us to love people we don't like. How have you managed to accomplish this? Is it even fair of God to ask us to do what doesn't come naturally?

DIGGING DEEPER

4. 'Love' can be a feeling/emotion (eros, philia) versus an act of will (agape - a decision to treat a person with respect and meet their need without expectation of return). 'Compassion' is not necessarily 'love', and vice versa. Which term is easier for you to use? To understand?
5. Did the Good Samaritan act from love or from compassion? ("the one who showed mercy" Luke 10.37). Or from "Christian duty"? Which one motivates you?
6. What expressions of love have you witnessed lately? (Think of several incidences.) How are they different, and what do they have in common? How do they show the many facets of love?
7. When did you last tell a family member or friend "I love you"? Have you hugged your _____ (fill in the blank) today? Who do you need to reach out to this week, with a hug, words of appreciation, or other action of love?

TAKING IT HOME

8. If our *God*, who knows our hearts without us speaking, wants us to express our love by telling Him we believe, how important must it be to God for us to tell others that we love *them*?
9. Hebrews 11.1: "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." We all hope for love, and it is intangible and unseen. Name some ways of faithfully showing love for another.
10. How strong is the connection between loving God and loving others? Between loving others and their loving you?
11. How much of what we do on Sunday mornings is an expected behavior? Forced? Natural? Acting? Genuine Christian Love?

Part 2 - ROMANS 10:9 Guide

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. We say it, we believe it; but what do we actually do about it?
2. Paul makes salvation sound simple. Can it really be that easy to be a Christian?
3. Why does Paul tell us we must both a) verbally confess and b) believe? Have you experienced a time when you didn't really know for sure what you thought (or believed) about something until you said it (or confessed it) out loud? Describe.
4. What about 1 John 3.17: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth."

DIGGING DEEPER

5. Sometimes we experience a disconnect between heart and mouth. Has there ever been a time when you believed with your heart, but were unable to verbally express this belief? How about a time when you confessed with our mouth with little or no belief in your heart? How did it make you feel?
6. If Christianity boils down to Romans 10.9-10 and Ephesians 2.8-9 and John 3.16, how did it get so complicated? So confusing? So controversial?

7. How well do you understand your "faith", or what you got yourself into when you "confessed with your lips and believed in your heart"?