

CITY CHURCH-EASTSIDE WEEKLY WORSHIP GUIDE

January 10, 2010



Move: Go

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations”...

As we move into the new year as a church, there’s no better way to begin than to reflect on the vision that God has given us here at City Church. That vision is summed up in the following statement: “City Church–Eastside seeks to embody and articulate the historic Christian faith, bringing about spiritual, social and cultural renewal on Atlanta’s urban eastside and, by extension, the world.” The three different types of renewal described here can be abbreviated in the words beauty, peace, and devotion with our focus this week on devotion.

When we talk about devotion we’re essentially talking about bringing people into a life-changing relationship with Christ. As Matthew 28:16-20 describes this is exactly what took place in the lives of the disciples. In this passage Jesus tells not only the disciples, but also us, to “go” with a vision for his kingdom. This go command moves us to both worship and proclamation.

Pivotal events in Jesus’ ministry always occurred on the mountain. After 3 years the person and mission of Jesus was still unclear to some degree with the disciples, but verse 17 tells us that something finally clicked. It was when they recognized Jesus’ worth and fell down before him in worship that a transformation took place. We’re all inherently designed for worship so understanding it a bit more is essential. Worship can be defined as proclaiming that which has great worth. Work, family, and hobbies often receive our highest affections and in some sense receive our worship. Another interesting reality of worship is that we become what we worship. The root always determines the life of the plant. In the same way our roots profoundly shape our character, decisions, and desires. So upon examination this week ask yourself, “what is it that captures you day after day?” and consequently do you like the person you’ve become? The command of Christ not only moves us to worship, but it also moves us to

proclaim. In verse 17 the disciples experienced a transformation as they witnessed the resurrection of Christ. His resurrection was the physical proof that they were loved by the Father and the recipients of his supreme affection. As the great love of the Father rested in the seat of their heart, they were naturally moved to proclaim Christ as Lord. Whether it be a restaurant or a great product we can all think of our latest commendation. It is very natural to commend that which we cherish and this is why the Christian is drawn to evangelism. If Christ is our highest affection we cannot help but commend him to others. Yet often we shirk from evangelism that stems from a fear of rejection. Moreover, culturally we are told to keep these matters to ourselves. But the beauty and worth of Christ is the great sun that burns away the mist of anxiety. Lo, He will be with you always. Amen!

Sermon Application

The questions and thoughts below can be used for further reflection this week. Seek to use a journal or discuss with a friend. Most of all use this to consider how the gospel of Christ can be transforming. Enjoy!

Application Questions: Matthew 28:16-20 **Vision Focal Point: Devotion & the Parish**

1. Why is it important for any organization to continually revisit and utilize a vision statement? What do you find meaningful about the vision statement of City Church-Eastside?
2. Read the Matthew passage above. What caused the disciples in verse 17 to finally “get it” regarding Christ and his mission? How does this cause us to “get it”?
3. How can worship be defined? Why is it true that we’re all designed for worship? How do we know that?
4. It can be said that we are what we worship. What are you worshipping right now? Specifically, how are you being transformed into the image of Christ? Conversely how are you being transformed by the things of this world?
5. From a secular vantage point Christians are often questioned regarding the reasons for evangelism. Is evangelism a unique practice to Christianity?
6. What has been your experience with evangelism? Why to you find it to be challenging or easy? If need be how can your perspective on evangelism change?
7. What is parish ministry all about? What are the fruits of a parish focus? Discuss several needs of your neighborhood and spend some time praying over these needs.

If you been around City Church-Eastside, even for a brief time, you’ve heard us use the term “parish ministry”. You might be asking yourself what is the parish model and specifically what does it have to do with peace? Many churches here in Atlanta have a admirable vision to reach the greater metro-area, but that is really not our aim. Parish model ministry is integral to our vision in that it focuses our ministry efforts based on the geography of the eleven historic neighborhoods here on the eastside. A parish focus has an acute impact sociologically, philosophically, and theologically.

We have all felt the sociological strain of living in one of the largest cities in North America. The underdevelopment of public transportation coupled with a lack of geographic boundaries for urban sprawl has created an unsustainable union. The mega-church, while advantageous in some ways, has encouraged a metro-wide focus which in turn causes people to often commute to church much in the same way as they commute to their workplace.

Many who commute a great distance to a church often enjoy exuberant Sunday worship, but feel disconnected from community with one another and ministry in a local context. As sociological concerns such as community, the environment, and stewardship come into sharper focus a parish approach comes to the foreground.

As one looks around CCE, a parish approach significantly shapes our ministry philosophy. Our missional community groups are neighborhood oriented allowing people who live just blocks away from one another to grow and serve as residents of their own neighborhood. Our quarterly service projects focus on opportunities right here on the eastside. In summary the parish approach helps to create a greater space for people to live and love. Finally, a parish approach is supported theologically. God calls us to seek the peace of the city (Jeremiah 29:7). With that in mind, we seek to be a local church that should we ever close our doors the community would mourn. Moreover, a parish mindset directs our questions about our community. Instead of asking “how can I use the city for my advantage” we ask “how can we serve the city for its benefit and the glory of God”. In this way we become a transformative influence as we work to build the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

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Vision Statement of City Church-Eastside

