

Life Groups – 6th March, Christ Church Value: Graciousness

Values - highlight specific characteristics of our life as a Christian community. Graciousness has its roots in Grace. Grace is the unmerited gift of salvation freely given by God through Jesus to those who believe. It's something we don't deserve and cannot earn. Jesus death and resurrection, purchased our forgiveness, gave us new life and reconciled us to God our Father.

Graciousness - is the outworking of Grace in our lives. As we emulate the character of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we begin to display aspects of Grace in our attitudes, actions and words. Paul encourages us to adopt gracious characteristics in Philippians 2:1-17, Colossians 3: 1-14 & 4:2-6 using Jesus as a pattern. These include (Phil 2: 1-2) unity, (v3) humility, (v4) serving, (v14) joyful spirit, (Col 3:9) truthfulness, (v12) compassion, (v13) forgiveness, (v14) love, (4:2) thankfulness, (v6) graceful conversation. So graciousness is about how we deal with one another.

Motivation -the question for us is “are we motivated by the same things that motivated Jesus”? Jesus didn't come to condemn but to save. He always put the interests of others first. He didn't give people what they deserved but, in mercy, what they didn't.

Experiencing God's Grace - first hand is essential before we can extend it to others.

Other's Needs - graciousness in our lives may at first be unnatural, because it means putting others first. It's about prioritising their needs; it's about listening not telling and it's about empathy and understanding. It's not about saying “sorry” but having the understanding not to cause hurt in the first place.

Characteristics of ungraciousness – it causes upset, strife, broken relationships and offense.

Characteristics of graciousness – it shows care, concern and love. As we focus on the value of graciousness our love and unity deepen. We demonstrate Christ's love in action.

Questions:

Thinking about how we act in graciousness, why is it important that we experience God's Grace first hand?

How does being “in Christ” (2 Cor 5:17) help us to be gracious?

In what ways have you experienced ungraciousness? What can you learn from this?

Reflect on whether there are things for which you regularly have to apologise. Why is that?

Can you recall acts of graciousness you have seen or experienced? What impression did that leave?

As the Body of Christ what key things could we do to act and experience a greater degree of graciousness?

What would you like to ask of God in helping you to be more Christ like in your attitudes and gracious in your actions?