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Subject: today's devotion (Saturday!)

40 Days of Community

A Set of Thoughts, Ideas, Questions and Ponderings
Submitted for your Digestion
October 8, 2005 Day 14

Introduction: We are all in “*this*” 2gether. No one is getting out alive. As we explore what it means to be in community through Rick Warren’s better together it is essential that we tailor make this study to fit our communities. This devotional is meant to be a conversation starter. It is personal musings on the daily readings’ subject. If another author is not noted then the opinions expressed are those of Jodi Haier and only reflect her understandings and her journey. If you do not wish to receive a devotional a day for the next 40 days, please respond to this email with a thoughtful “no, thank you” ” **Instead of just forwarding this *please* send people’s email to me. I am not trying to be a control freak but I want to know where God’s going with this. People viewing this on the webpage can contact the webmaster with any comments. THANKS! Jodi**

Fellowship 2gether: “cultivating a life in common”

(1Cor 1:10) p.64 “Do we want to impress non-believers or do we want to influence them?” I would have to answer yes. I do not mean to impress people with wealth, prestige, or beauty. I do not mean to influence people by powerful connections, lofty education, or ageless wisdom. I can impress from a distance but what else will draw people in? Even a whisper impresses people with its subtlety. My life bears fruit. Resilience, peace, wholeness, joy and laughter are trademarks of a life uncommon. People are impressed and want to know how a sinner like me could ever attain such things in my life. Curiosity draws people near. The transparency of our lives needs to influence people. We need to guide as we have been guided. We need to share and develop our understandings of grace. Impressing people requires clarity of reward while influencing people requires developing relationships. As we invite others, non-believers and believers, into our homes and lives let us both impress on them, love and acceptance and let us influence their lives with grace.

Grow 2gether: “accepting, affirming, and advising”

(Rom 15:7, 1Thess 5:11, Col 3:16) How can I tell you your shoes are ugly in a way that you can accept? How can I affirm your sense of self through style when you choose to wear those ugly shoes? How are you going to take my advice? Is this relationship worth destroying over shoes? We need to be dealing with issues that are worth demolishing and reconstructing relationships. And we need to deal with our own issues. If my friend asks me about my shoes then by all means, I’m ready to share.

This journey is not about us all being the same in the end. My experiences will never be the same as anyone else. Let me support one member in their struggle to believe. Let me be guided by members that have found peace and reconciliation. Let me question those members who have different answers to important questions. Small groups are not about fixing each others problems. They are about helping each other find their way on their journey. By the way, I love your shoes.

Serve 2gether: “working 2gether with 1 heart & 1 purpose”

(Phil 2:2) I am part of a family network. This group of people works 2gether to raise confident, productive, healthy members of society and keep our homes sane. Transportation of children to events, childcare, meal preparation,

nurturing and discipline are all areas that we share at different times. None of us have exactly the same rules and regulations but the system works because we base it on love, trust and good communication. This is a marvel of human technologies and our families benefit.

It is difficult in this technological age to rely on such a human contrivance. We think that technology helps us so much that we need to rely on humans less. I think the opposite is true. I think that technology takes care of the things we don't need, so that we can have time to focus on our humanity, something that technology can not do.

Service is something that machines cannot replace or replicate. The human touch, spiritual contact and emotional support cannot be found in a stapler, even if it digital and diesel powered. As we serve together, let us make service networks as well. Perhaps someday everyone will be caught in our worldwide service web.

Worship 2gether: “come 2gether in my name”

(Matt 18:20) I just want to share a song from Chris Rice.

Big Enough

None of us knows and that makes it a mystery
If life is a comedy, then why all the tragedy?
Three and a half pounds of brain try to figure out
What this world is all about
And is there an eternity, is there an eternity?

God if You're there, I wish you would show me
And God if You care then I need You to know me
I hope You don't mind me askin' the questions
But I figure You're big enough
I figure You're big enough

Lying on pillows we're haunted and half-awake
Does anyone hear us pray, “If I die before I wake?”
Then the morning comes and the mirror's another place
Where we wrestle face to face with the image of deity
The image of deity

God if You're there, I wish you would show me
And God if You care then I need You to know me
I hope You don't mind me askin' the questions
But I figure You're big enough
I figure You're big enough

When I imagine the size of the universe
And I wonder what's out past the edges
Then I discover inside me a space as big
And I believe that I'm meant to be
Filled up with more than just questions

God if You're there, I wish you would show me
And God if You care then I need You to know me
I hope You don't mind me askin' the questions
But I figure You're big enough
I figure You're big enough
'Cause I am not big enough

Reach Out 2gether: “get others to believe”

(Phil 1:27) In Rick Warren's book, The Purpose Driven Church, he outlines how he established and grew his church based on 5 questions.

- 1) What is the greatest need in this area?
- 2) Are you actively attending any church?
- 3) Why do you think that people don't attend church?
- 4) If you were looking for a church to attend, what kind of things would you look for?
- 5) What could I do for you to be helpful?

He actually went door to door, introducing himself and asking these questions. If people answered yes to question 2 then he stopped asking questions because his goal was not to convert the found but reach the lost. My challenge to you is to ask these questions of the people around you. Ask children, seniors, co-workers, sports-moms, corporate dads (pardon the stereotypes), doctors, and nurses. Give me the results and I will share them. I will even pay a reward to anyone who does so. It is essential that we look at ourselves from the eyes of the very people we want to reach.