

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better.*

Read James 2:1-17 aloud.

1. This passage addresses two problems that were going on in this church. What problem is described in 1-4?

How could such a situation develop in a church?

Who might face obstacles when they desire to worship with us?

2. What problem is addressed in 14-17?
Faith that hesitates to act for the good of another.

Why are Christians drawn to faith without action?

When have you been tempted to discuss scripture without actually following it?

What helps you to put your beliefs into actions that help others?

Who is someone we should be helping? How?

3. When the world sees the church discriminate against certain groups (poor, handicapped, uneducated, non-Southerners, Auburn fans, etc.), what do they think about Jesus? *See John 13:35.*

What if we are not prejudiced, but the world perceives we are that way? How does that affect our proclamation of Jesus?

What could we do to let the world see that we are not acting like the James 2 church?

Why should we be aware of our image among non-Christians?

How could we improve our image?

4. This series of lessons deals with the church leaving the building and not being so focused on ourselves. So why should this series include a lesson on loving one another?

When have you seen a church do a great job of loving one another?

How did that affect their impact on their community?

5. How could love for one another be part of teaching the world to love Jesus?

What are some practical steps we could take to let the world know that our congregation is a place where people...

- a. Listen to one another?
- b. Help one another?
- c. Practice forgiveness and reconciliation?
- d. Overcome cultural barriers that divide people?

If our church was doing those things in a significant way, how much would we have to advertise that it was occurring? How much would word spread without publicity?

6. What is the biggest challenge about Christians loving one another?

How can we manage this challenge?

What is the difference between loving one another and having warm feelings toward one another?

How many of your close friends are in our church?

What is good about church friends? What is good about friends outside the church?

III. Other resources

The point – When we love one another consistently & patiently, we show that God has changed us. The world will notice.

Prayer

Pray for a brother or sister in Christ who is difficult for you to get along with.

Ask God to guide you into relationships with godly friends.

Pray for the unity of the church.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Ask an adult in the group to point out some constellations. If it's a cloudy night, meet indoors and turn off the lights. Hide some items around the darkened room, including some flashlights or something that glows in the dark.

Talk about why you can see stars or lights so well at night. What makes them stand out?

Read Philippians 2:14-15 aloud.

What causes Jesus' followers to stand out?

Why is it hard to do things without complaining or arguing?

What helps you to complain less and argue less?

The Church has Left the Building

James 2 – Love one another

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **loving one another.**

This series is focused on the church turning its attention outward, but we cannot forget to love one another. In fact, the way we treat one another is one of our most important ways of showing the world that we have been changed by the power of God. There are plenty of places where people can find criticism or anger or conflict. But when they see a church that truly loves one another in specific ways, they want to know why we are different.

Leadership tip: Your small group is one of the most practical tools in the world for living out the one another commands of the New Testament. A newcomer can blend in a large crowd, but within your circle, everyone can enjoy a sense of community. Pray for God to give your group a sense of closeness and love.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ When is a time that you feel lonely?
- ❖ When have you felt like a minority?
- ❖ Who is someone who does a good job inviting others to feel like they belong?
- ❖ Where are some places in our society that people think they will feel accepted?

“The Church has Left the Building” is a series of Small Group guides written in support of the Missional Church curriculum by David Wray and Chris Benjamin. It is designed around the concept of adults discussing material in Bible class and then processing it in small group meetings during the same week. These guides, as well as the Missional Church curriculum, are based on the book, *Treasure in Clay Jars*, by Lois Barrett and others.

Training tools and study guides are at www.collegehills.org, then Ministries, then LIFE groups.