

Leadership Community

Jesus "rules" of faithfulness:

*Luke 16: faithful in little(before much), faithful with temporal(before eternal), faithful with another's(before your own)

O. INTRO:

***Values are principles, or standards of behavior...that shape a person or a culture.**

-AF Core values: Integrity/Service before self/Excellence in all you do

All military branches have similar stated values...

So why do I read in my daily briefing emails...stories of military members going to prison or being dismissed for violating these values?

Question: So what are some of the possible reasons?

These are "core" values...they cannot simply be tacked on the outside of a person.

They can be taught...but they must caught...or they will not become "core"

You could see the Old Covenant as "Values"...trying to work on a person from the outside in.

The New Covenant you could call "Heart Values"...working out of a person from the inside.

Of course the New Covenant is "Christ in you" so its not a perfect analogy.

But Christ "in us" does in a real sense place God's values "in us" as well...along with God's power for become those values.

Jer. 31:33 “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Question: What are some stated values where you work?

How does the organization seek to instill these values in the company culture?

What are some barriers to that happening?

Why addressing these here and how does this relate to my small group?

*When Sherri shared on Next Generation Sunday she addressed a number of things she had seen in the Youth Group this summer that demonstrated their growth.

*She built her discussion around the heart attitudes...she directly or indirectly addressed all 7 of them.

The youth group is a "values" driven culture...that is why kids who engage that culture are changed in lasting ways.

It is not program or personality driven culture...**it is values driven**...and so as the students engage Christ through leaders and programs...in a values driven community...they are changed.

Our entire church is a "values" driven culture: we have programs, personalities, and traditions...but values drive the culture.

Cultures are shaped by what they "communicate, demonstrate, celebrate."

We teach these in New Member (and will be preaching through them this fall)...but we must keep them in front our minds...and recommit (if need be) to them in our lives.

These are essential to healthy church life, and group life.

Seven Essential Heart Attitudes: (parse out those 4 words)

1. Seven

"Why do we call them the seven essential heart attitudes?"

Because there are seven of them.

"Okay smart alec...but Why not 5 or 17?"

Why these at all, why not just "The Bible?"

1. These are Biblical principles that directly relate to our life together as a church body, family.

-You could have others for your job, or your fitness, or for missions, etc.

2. These seven are a good summary of the Biblical principles, that when consistently adopted, applied...lead to healthy community.

They don't address all the church should be doing...evangelism, discipleship, preaching, praying...they address the attitudes of the heart that must reside in members of a body to have a healthy body so that it can accomplish all it should be doing.

3. They are comprehensive enough to be effective and simple enough to be useful. (so not 1 and not 70)

2. Essential: For what?

-Effective community

-Joy and happiness together...no artificial drama.

*People who are bored or unhappy...manufacture drama.

*People who are fully engaged with life and God...experience life as a dramatic story...but they don't make up, or create artificial drama.

People on the front lines tend to not engage pettiness...the battle is too real for such games.

People who trust one another and enjoy their lives together don't create drama...they are enjoying life why spoil it...they are not bored and unhappy...they are engaged and joyful.

*Even though life and ministry may be hard...life and ministry is good...because they are out there on the front lines where God is at work.

*These heart attitudes address the realities of a healthy life together...they are the opposite of manufactured drama.

2. Heart:

Three words, same thing: (heart, spirit, will) "The real, thinking, choosing you."

Heart: Central position in our lives (Above all else guard your hearts: Prov 4:23)

Spirit: Distinct from physical reality (not body or brain)

Will: Ability to choose, to initiate, to bring into being.

Heart is the executive center of a human life. Where decisions and choices are made for the whole person.

Shape the heart...shape the life

Essential heart attitudes: Think of these as what are the values that are written on the walls of the heart's command post as decisions are made, resources are released, responses to real world events are taken.

Everyone, everywhere, all the time is living out of set of operating principles, values...that they have accidentally, or purposefully embedded in their hearts.

We want to do it on purpose and in line with the truth of God.

3. Attitudes:

Attitude: "You have a bad attitude"...what does that mean?

Thinking? Feeling? Actions?...yes!

Like an airplane's "attitude"...its orientation to the fixed ground.

Our attitude is our orientation to the outside world...in this case...to one another.

We cannot choose the fixed ground around us (externals)...we can choose our orientation to it.

So these are not merely boxes to check...but attitudes of the heart...that shape our lives together...our approach or orientation to one another...to life and circumstances.

***Question: We call these heart attitudes but they are things we can actually do...why not call them "Essential life actions"? What are your thoughts?**

***We desire that these actions flow from a changed and changing heart.**

*Only God can truly do these things...**and** we must faithfully choose these things.

River 28 years: (very old, very young)

1. Trials, tragedy, transitions...but we have largely escaped being a drama-driven church...and program, and personality driven.
2. Have been able to maintain a relatively consistent vision...we see things differently now than we did...but our philosophy of ministry is essential the same now as then.
3. This is the God's grace operational in our lives...and on our part as a church body a settled philosophy of ministry...heart attitudes are key to that.

VIM

Vision: We have some clarity regarding what God has called us to and what we want for our lives together...**it is important that you can understand and articulate it.**

Intention: We have made ongoing decisions to move that way...we are not playing games with this...**it is important that as leaders we live the decided life in regards to key values.**

Means: We employ real choices in the real world to live the vision...the things we do as a church...**there are things in our lives personally and together collectively we must do to move into this vision.**

These heart attitudes are a part of that.

HEART ATTITUDES:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Participate In Ministry: | Participate |
| 2. Demonstrate an open and honest Life: | Share |
| 3. Maintain Clear Relationships: | Forgive |
| 4. Put the success of others first | Serve |
| 5. Follow Biblical Leadership: | Follow |
| 6. Support The Church: | Give |
| 7. Give, Receive Correction: | Engage |

Scripture

Explanation

Discuss

Contemplate/apply to your life and ministry

1. Participate in the ministry.

1 Peter 4:10-11: Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1Cor. 12:18-20 But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

Eph. 4:11-12 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Much of what has happened historically in Christian ministry has been perceived as the attempts by the few (vocational ministers) to get the many (lay people) to go do **stuff**.

To show up for activities, to give money, to share their faith...to be nice to one another...read their bibles...etc.

Often this "stuff" is perceived as what they would **not** want to do if not convinced or coerced to do it by the pastor.

On the other hand, there has been a perception in the church at large that pastors are "paid" to do ministry for us...that is their job not ours...we have "real jobs"

Two pole positions:

*Pastors: trying to get people to do stuff they don't want to do but need to

*People: paying pastors to do their religious stuff for them

Fact: All people are called to a life of ministry (faith and love in action), some vocationally others what is called "lay" ministry.

Laymen has come to mean "novice" or non-professional...but the word we get "lay" from means "people", specifically "people of God"

1Pet. 2:9-10 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people(Laos) belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people(Laos), but now you are the people(Laos) of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

So the HA of participation in the ministry...is a vision of life in the Kingdom...and it is active involvement with what God is doing in the world through his church.

****ME IN COLLEGE****...I came alive when I saw that God wanted to use me in the lives of others...this became and remains a compelling vision for my life.

The reality is that when the church is taught and trained and released to do the ministry set before them...they quickly realize this is where the life is.

This is where we want to be, nowhere else...sure its challenging...but it is where the action is...its where God is at work.

What about ministry "outside" the church?

The church, biblically is the heart of God's mission in the world.

Not big "C" church, but little "c"...local bodies.

This is where people are being shaped into the image of Christ...life on life ministry happens.

ParaChurch: Youth Horizons, Focus, and are arms of the church...they thrive when the church thrives.

At times they rise up to meet a need the church is not meeting...but if you asked Brad, or Earnest what the priority of the kingdom...they would say "The church"

KEY QUESTION to put before people you lead: "If everyone participated in the ministry at my level (giving of time, talents, treasure) would the ministry be sustainable?"

If not, then "Am I letting others carry the load I should be carrying?"

Why this is HA: "Should someone else be paying with their time, money, and energy...what I am benefiting from?"

*I'll circle back to this.

Contemplate: How can you communicate, demonstrate, celebrate this heart attitude in your group...a vision for the joy of joining God in ministry at River?

Asking people to serve is good for them...how do you see this and communicate this?

Other thoughts:

*gifts/desires/opportunities/needs

-Worship team (desire: no need, no gift)

-Nursery (need: no desire)

-Ministry to people:...every gift mix fits here and there are plenty of opportunities.

2. Demonstrate an open and honest life.

Ephesians 4:25: Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Eph. 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Prov. 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.

***Question: What are your thoughts regarding what this means and what it doesn't mean?**

***Question: What makes this HA so vital to healthy community/relationships?**

A relationship does not survive and certainly cannot thrive without **appropriate** openness and honesty.

***An open and honest life is a life of humility and faith versus pride and fear.**

***Pride and fear can keep people from living this heart attitude out.**

***Humility is the opposite of pride.**

***Faith is the opposite of fear.**

This is trusting God with your reputation, your image...sharing what is actually real about where you are now...not everything but everything that is appropriate to tell.

So..."Spirit of this value" is don't hold back in fear and pride...both will undermine your spiritual health and that of the community as a whole.

People are challenged by your strengths and encouraged by your weakness...they need appropriate honesty in both

This is about authenticity...sharing strengths and weaknesses.

This is essential for growth personally and relationally:

1. Humility(opposite of pride): God empowers it

James 4:6 "God gives grace to the humble, but opposes the proud."

2. Faith (opposite of fear): God is pleased by it

Heb. 11:6 "without faith it is impossible to please God."

Contemplate: How can I model humility and faith in my group through an open and honest life? How can I cast vision for this?

*How can I maintain appropriate balance here?

Confidentiality:

1. Keep what is in group in group (otherwise will short-circuit open sharing)

2. When you (leader) need help thinking through an issue or event **or** you have a sort of secondary "trauma"...it is appropriate to take it to a staff.

-This is not a betrayal of confidence

*Doctors do it, chaplains do it...goal is to provide best possible help and stay healthy.

3. Maintain clear relationships.

Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

***Picked this one because it demonstrates that** It is impossible to have clear relationship with God if we do not have (as best we can) clear relationships with one another.

1 John 4:20b-21 For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

***I saw this HA in practice (this week) and it a beautiful picture of the gospel...peace, reconciliation, joy, freedom.**

Question: Why is this essential to healthy community?

Question: What are the barriers here?

Three important things:

- a. Key principle: Circle of confession=circle of commission
- b. Be proactive and faithful but realize it can take time
- c. The limits of reality:
 - Takes two to make a relationship...one to break a relationship.

So...the heart attitude= Rom. 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

What do we do when someone refuses to make things right?

- 1. We wait and pray (wait appropriate amount of time)
- 2. We love and forgive
- 3. **Church discipline: A rare and difficult necessity**

Heart behind this attitude:

- *Our assumption: we will sin against each other
- *Our commitment: we will forgive each other

Contemplate: How can you communicate, demonstrate, celebrate this in your group?
-What might that look like in practice.

4. Put the success of others above your own.

Philippians 2:3-4: Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each

of you to the interests of the others.

John 13:14-15: Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Question: How might this HA be misconstrued? What are some things it doesn't mean?

Question: All HA are essential...this one is so very powerful and important...foundational for the others...why is this so?

Jesus said the great commandment that sums up the entire word of God is...Love God, love others as you love yourself.

All families, cultures, groups of people, friendships...rise or fall on this principle.

*If I seek your best and you seek my best...we thrive together.

If I put myself first, and you do the same...things fall apart.

Imagine a body where the various parts and organs are self-seeking...the whole body dies.

We put each other first because we honor Christ above all.

This is not about jumping in front of a bullet for someone:

One simple practical application of this...Sunday morning...looking for people who you don't know, who look out of place...going to them rather than (staying "safe" or with the people I already know and like")

Another: I had a person who thought I had ignored them because I was upset with them, or didn't like them. They came (took a lot of courage for them) and they asked me about it.

-I had no idea, cleared things up...was so glad they told me.

-This was both: Them living an open and honest life and putting my interests first.

Contemplate: How can you communicate, demonstrate, celebrate this HA in your group?

5. Submit to Church leadership within scriptural limits.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13: Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

Hebrews 13:17: Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

Military Retirements: flag foldings:

Quote: Revolutionary War Sailor Stephen Decatur "My country, may she always be right...but right or wrong she is my country."

He could mean...When wrong, the country must be set right.

If he means...that...then its good.

But if it means loyalty regardless of the direction my country...then it's not good...that is not being a patriot.

*It was said of the Willow Creek Board that they choose loyalty to the institution and a man over the truth...that is misguided loyalty.

*Loyalty is to the truth not an individual...but that loyalty shows up in relationships, or should.

Unless the leader asks you to violate Scripture (or a law or your conscience)...then we should submit to the leader as unto God.

*The balance is found in the wording of the HA...within **Scriptural limits**.

Hebrews 13:17: Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

***This has been my experience here for 28 years...thank you and thank God for you.**

***Apply this to your leadership in your group:**

God uses principled leadership for his purposes.

****Types of leadership:**

-Positional: positional gives you the priv and resp of leadership with a person or people.
-It is appointed or assigned.

-Personal: through your life and your sacrificial investments in others you the priv and resp of leadership with a person or people.
-It is earned.

*As a group leader you have positional leadership in your entire group and personal leadership with some in your group.

In our church you were giving a position because you have earned personal leadership in the lives of others.

*Lead in confidence knowing God has called you (positional)

*Lead sacrificially making it easy for others to follow (personal)

Leadership is essential to any healthy human culture.

***There are times when you must lead in ways that might be unpopular with a group member.**

Failure of nerve: Many leadership failures are a failure of nerve.

-Put others first by leading them with confidence.

King David: Slinking around over Absalom.

Contemplate

How can you it make it easier for your group to follow you?

What will you do when someone makes your leadership difficult?

What might a "failure of nerve" look like?

6. Support the work of River financially.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8: Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and

whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

1 Timothy 5:17-18: The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 18 For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

Matt. 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This heart attitude is a very physical action (giving money to our church)

But it addresses three important "character" or "heart" issues

1. Faith: Will I trust God to provide for me, if I obey him with my giving?

Do you have to make sure you have enough before you trust God, or will you trust God to make sure you have enough?

2. Values: Is God (and his church) valuable to me such that it shows up in how I use your money?

3. Privilege/Responsibility: "Will I be faithful" This is a very important principle in any healthy human culture.

-They must be matched

*If you are enjoying the building, the fruit of the efforts of others (preaching, programs, etc)...and yet you are allowing others to "pay your way"...that is a mismatch of priv/resp.

*You must ask (and challenge your members to ask)... "What would happen to the ministry I enjoy and rely on if everyone did what I do?"

God provides for our church...each month as a staff we hand out our pay stubs, hold them...and thank God for you and for his provision.

This is a very actionable, practical way to experience God...and many miss that opportunity.

***Why River? I give elsewhere...that is partially answered in the Priv/Resp principle I just**

mentioned.

Biblically: The local church is at the heart of God's global mission in the world.

Most often when the church is addressed in the NT it refers to a specific local body...not all believers, everywhere.

So since God has called people to be a part of a body...we are to engage the priv/resp balance that is required of any relationship.

*If someone else is paying my way here...I am not functioning in faithfulness here.

Now back to the larger question of giving as a spiritual value:

*This is about treasuring and trusting God.

***Earnest tithing as a boy**

It is a gut-check, street level clue as to where my heart is.

*Jesus told the story of a Man who found the pearl of great price or treasure in a field...happily sold everything to buy the field or the treasure.

-That parable is not about giving money to the church, its about giving your life for the gospel.

*But it demonstrates the joyful and generous responses our hearts should have to what God has done for us.

I'm not leaning on you or asking you to lean on others...I'm telling what Scripture says and what Christy and I have experienced together the past 35 years

I'm not selling anything here...there is no promise God will replace you 1 dollar for 10.

But he does promise to show up in practical and powerful ways when we operate by faith not sight.

Issues related to giving:

1. If I can't give cheerfully, should I still give?

-yes, give from obedience and close the gap on the joy of obedience.

2. Is a "tithe" biblically required? (different opinions, but it is a good starting point)

“Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. “But you ask, ‘How do we rob you?’ “In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the LORD Almighty. Mal. 3:8-11

*That is Old Testament!

*Yes, its not repeated like that in the NT but "Joyful and Generous" giving is in the NT.

***Gospel giving is surely not less than Law giving: Gospel giving=generously, joyfully.**

*Christy and I have always, for 35 years...given

That is our conviction...God has provided and we have seen him do so...especially when we gave when we could "not afford it"

3. I give just not to the church

-Earnest has asked people who gave to YH but not to their church to stop giving to YH

-Its good to give to parachurch, my conviction is that its essential to give where God has placed us.

PERSONAL NOTE:

There has been a lot of harm done to the lives of people and the reputation of Christ by unscrupulous people making unbiblical claims and living unbiblical lives regarding money.

This fact has led me to say very little about giving the past 28 years.

I have probably reacted to the imbalance with my own imbalance...because giving money...is where I have seen God reveal himself in my life and the lives of others over and over.

I should not have kept so quiet about this.

Contemplate: (later)

*How do you lead in communicating, demonstrating, celebrating that Jesus is Lord of our money?

7. Give and receive spiritual correction.

Matthew 18:15: “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.”

Hebrews 3:12-13: See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

Hebrews 10:24-25: And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Ephesians 4:15: Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Give AND Receive: This should be something we are learning to find joy in.

Spiritual correction: Spiritual means we are not nitpicking people over every area of their lives.

-Correction means we are out for their good...like glasses correction vision...giving "correct" or "true" ideas corrects life vision.

Prov. 25:11 A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

*Aptly has to do with timing.

*"The right word at the right time...is a thing of real beauty"

What this does not mean:

-You should easily rebuke or critique others.

-Only truth and not the timing matters

-That you have an earned right to speak truth to anyone

-What someone tells you something (even if they say it is from God) it is always true and from God.

-**Don't nickpick people**...if you don't have (over time) about a large encouragement over rebuke ratio (or more) then you are probably out of balance.

What this means:

-I need to love people enough to be willing to not be liked by them at times...they may be unhappy with me. (this is less likely to be true if you made a lot of investments in their life)

-I need to love people and the truth enough to be willing to be wrong...make it easy for people to speak truth to me.

-Some people at times need more correction than others...but no one needs only correction.

***It doesn't have to be a stinging rebuke...and it never needs to come across as angry.**

It helps me to think of this as "truth telling" not "truth selling"

*Selling has too much control, too much of "me" in it.

*Telling leaves room for the other to be a choosing person before God...I am not responsible to control them, only to love them.

***I have leaned, more recently, into asking people questions like:**

"Are you satisfied?"

"What do you want?"

"How can I help?"

Spiritual correction can sound ominous: Maybe you should think of it more like going to the optometrist.

"Better here or here?"

*No one goes away from the eye doctor and says "What a jerk, he told me my eye sight is 20/80 and he gave me these lenses so I can see 20/20!"

Contemplate: How can you communicate, demonstrate, celebrate this HA in your life and group?

CONCLUSION:

All members of River sign a commitment to these 7 Heart Attitudes.

You are the front edge of our church (leaders always are)...if you run others will walk, if you walk others will sit.

It is important that you run out in front...not to impress but to bless...leaders have been a calling, a role...and we are to use that calling to bless others and honor God.

Lest you think this is a lot to ask: Leaders who run out in front for the good of others and the glory of God...benefit more than anyone else from their leadership.

Leadership is a responsibility...and it is a privilege.

We get to experience God in ways that people who do not lead will not.

You set the culture: By what you Communicate, Demonstrate, Celebrate

HEART BEHIND THE ATTITUDES:

1. Participate In Ministry: Participate

I will serve where God has placed me...this is my family

2. Demonstrate an open and honest Life: Share

I will let others in to my life in ways that honors God and blesses others

3. Maintain Clear Relationships: Forgive

As far as it depends on me, I will forgive and seek forgiveness

4. Put the success of others first Serve

I will Seek the good of others not merely my own good

5. Follow Biblical Leadership: Follow

I will follow Christ by following Biblical leaders for the glory of God and the good of the Body.

6. Support The Church: Give

I will Treasure Christ and Trust Christ...I support the spiritual family he has placed me in

7. Give, Receive Correction: Engage

I Look to needs of others...I will be willing to offer and receive (and learn to love) correction.

****COFFEE AND CONTENT**