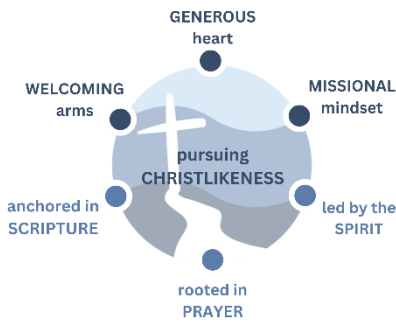


Living our Values... Growing our Culture

Week 6: Welcoming Arms



Opening question:

- What is the best welcome you have ever had. How did it make you feel?

Readings –Mark 10:13-16, Matthew 25:31-40

Questions (choose some from):

- 1) Think of the story of the Prodigal son (you might look it up if you want to: Luke 15:11-24). What does this story say to you about God's welcoming heart?
- 2) Dave talked on Sunday about 'A church with welcoming arms, welcomes people like Jesus would.' What do we learn from Jesus' welcome of others – who did he welcome? How did he welcome? How did he act differently from the other religious leaders?
- 3) Romans 15:7 (ESV) says 'Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.' What does this mean for you? For us as a church? Where might we do things differently/better? Who do you find it hard to welcome?
- 4) Welcoming is far more than greeting people at the door. It is 'welcoming people into our community and into a transforming relationship with Jesus.' What might this look like for us as individuals and us as a church?
- 5) Read Matthew 25:31-40. How might this help us see things differently when welcoming others? Mother Teresa said in response to this 'I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus.' Discuss...

Key verse:

'Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.' (Romans 15:7 ESV)

Respond & Live it out:

You might like to do one of more of these

- 1) Take some time in silence to come before God. Think of the people you will encounter this week, particularly those who might be on the 'outside.' Ask God to put on your heart anyone that he might particularly be inviting you show his welcome to this week... what might that look like for you? Share about this and pray with one another.
- 2) Think of someone you find hard to welcome. Ask God to give you his welcoming heart for that person and for you to see welcoming them as welcoming Him.