



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: Ephesians 5:18b-25

Sermon Summary:

The air that the Ephesians breathed was one steeped in hierarchy and patriarchy. As a male Roman citizen who owned land and an estate, you were a patriarch. And the society and culture around you, where more than 50% of people were slaves, served for so that you would gain benefit. As a patriarch, you were part of a very small minority of the total population. Nevertheless, no matter what, you as a patriarch would come out on top.

As a patriarch there would be certain household relationships as well: husband/wife, father/child, and master/slave. He again enjoyed the place of authority and power in each of those relationships. But what happens when that patriarch became a follower of Jesus? (Eg: Book of Philemon). Were they to live as their society and culture expected? Paul subtly subverts the expected societal behaviours in a typical household in Eph. 5:22-6:9, as husbands/fathers/masters were called to live in a new manner toward their "subordinates". As we see in Jesus, we don't serve and live out of power and authority, but out of love and a heart of humility.

Discussion:

1. When you read the word "submit" in the Bible, what has your understanding been of its meaning? After a few weeks of studying it, what is your current understanding?
2. Describe the Greco-Roman patriarchy the Ephesian believers lived in.
3. How does Jesus lay down a new understanding of submission in Phil. 2:5-7a?

4. Why was Paul addressing wives/children/slaves so scandalous? How did it call them to live in a new manner in the New Humanity created in Christ?
5. Paul called husbands to ' love their wives ' (5:25) and to ' give themselves up for them ' . While we acknowledge this a s proper behaviour for a husband, how would this have sounded to a patriarch? Did it benefit him in any way? Would it have looked strange to his neighbours and associates?
6. How does Jesus washing his disciples feet (John 13) illustrate submission for us?

End with Prayer.

- Pray for new understandings of submission for all in your group.
- Pray for any needs of people in your group.