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Group Notes 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010

### **Icebreaker**

How well do people know you in your group, quite well, a little or not at all? Try and think of three things about yourself, two true and one completely false. Take it in turns to tell the rest of the group these three things (but don't tell them which are the true ones) and see how many of your group can identify which is the false statement.

### **Word – Sermon summary Psalm 139**

This Psalm is teaching about how God is ever present in our life and has complete knowledge about us, in every place we are, in creation and how he has ownership over us. It's God's will that we become like him. The psalm is written with the understanding that to escape from God's presence is not possible, in fact the writer doesn't want to escape from God, even though he knows that God sees all in his life, the good bits and the not so good bits.

God has a plan for our life and his hand is on everything we do, whether we know it or not. These plans however are not revealed to us in one fell swoop, God takes time to reveal his plans to us, to reveal everything is far too much for us to cope with and our human minds couldn't cope.

God also formed us and made us who we are and that includes all aspects of us, our spiritual gifts, our hearts and passions, our abilities, our personality. The other item which forms us is our experience of life, what we've done, seen or said in past all shapes who we are and how we will react in a given set of circumstances. God uses this 'SHAPE' for his purposes. We were invited on Sunday to use this SHAPE to invite people to come to church with us on Back to Church Sunday, to re-establish their relationship with God because God is waiting for the opportunity to show each and everyone of us just how much he loves.

### **Word 2 – Discussion Questions**

Spiritual Gifts – These gifts are given to each and everyone of us, different gifts but all from the same source. These gifts are given to help the entire Church – what are your own gifts? Can you identify gifts in others in your group? Have you told them?

Heart – We are created in God's image, God is passionate about us and not lukewarm. What is your passion?

Abilities – We can all use our natural abilities to work for God's glory. His workmanship is marvellous. It would be boring and bland if we were all the same, what are your natural abilities?

Personality – God created your personality, what type did he give you. Extrovert? Introvert? How would you describe yourself and how do you use your personality for God?

Experience – Think back over your life and try and identify places where, on looking back you can see that God was there. If you're comfortable with this, share these times with the group?

The gospel reading for the day leads into the story of the prodigal son, and describes the image of the father running to the returning son. These are the words of the chorus of a song played;

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'Just for you I'll wash you down, cleanse your soul and be around  
Hold your hand and lead the way be with you all through your day  
Just for you I'll sacrifice everything in my life, I will give all this to you  
Dedicate myself to you

I'll climb the highest mountain, and I'll never stop  
I'll climb the highest mountain, until I reach the top  
I'm gonna climb that mountain  
I'm gonna reach the top  
And I will not stop'

Do any of these words speak particularly to you? Again, if you're happy to share with the group?

### **Worship Ideas** (for groups with no musicians)

Ask everyone to get into a comfortable position, close their eyes and then to be very quiet together for a few minutes. Do the rest of the worship as a voiceover after the quiet spell, with people still sitting still and keeping their eyes closed...

- What sounds can you hear? Creaking furniture? Passing traffic? The plumbing? Birdsong? Your own breathing? Or your neighbour's?...
- Imagine God being aware of all these sounds...
- Imagine Him being aware of you hearing them and thinking about them...
- Imagine Him being aware of all the people in the world... all their thoughts, all their pain, all their longings...
- Read the following bits from Psalm 139:
  - Lord, you have searched me and you know me...
  - You perceive my thoughts from afar...
  - You hem me in, behind and before...
  - Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
  - Too lofty for me to attain...
  - How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
  - How vast is the sum of them!
- Thank God for how deeply He knows us, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, our past and our future. And He knows everyone else we will ever meet as deeply and personally as that too.

### **Works and Witness**

You know it's going to be Back to Church Sunday – 26 September! Please invite a friend and please pray!

We also have Alpha coming up (start – 7 October) and social events such as the Harvest Supper and the Christmas Fair. Perhaps your friends might find one of these really enjoyable too?