

Half Time

Acts 1- 14

1ST HALF STATS:

God gave a clear **plan and power** to change the world.
Acts 1:1-8, Matthew 28:16-20, John 15:4, 2 Timothy 1:7-9

People were radically changed.
Acts 1-4, Acts 3:12, 4:13, 1 John 3:16-19, James 1:27

It was easy to **love God** and people **like themselves**.
Acts 1-8, 4:32-35, 1 John 4:19-21

It was much harder to love those who **were different**.
Acts 8-14, Matthew 5:43-47, Proverbs 25:21-22, Romans 12:9-21

LOCKER ROOM TALK:

Jesus' original **game plan**:
Luke 10:25-37, Matthew 5:43-47, John 17:20-23

- ▶ **Love God**
- ▶ **Love Your Neighbor**

2ND HALF GAME PLAN:

It takes two things to change the world:

- ① **Obedient People**
- ② **Holy Spirit**

We are **plan A**, there is no **plan B**.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of October 19, 2008

This week's homework will focus on preparing us for the Weekend of Service and beyond. We want to show our community God's love in very practical ways and pray that our projects, attitudes and words will have great impact.

QUICK REVIEW: Take a look at your sermon notes from this week. Was there a point in the sermon that challenged you, caught your attention or even confused you?

MY STORY

1. Looking ahead at the *Weekend of Service* or other opportunities you will have to serve, what are you looking forward to? What concerns, if any, do you have?

2. What do you think about the following responses from last year's *Weekend of Service*?

"A few hours into the first Saturday morning shift, the shelter manager stopped by to take pictures and said, 'This is the first time in my life I've seen a Christian. Lots of people who say they are Christians have stopped and asked us to go to their churches, but this is the first time I've ever seen a real Christian.'"

"It was the perfect service project. No personal glory, no thanks, no hugs; it was an act of service for the glory of God. Let's do it again."

3. When is serving others most challenging for you?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We will all bring our own unique expectations into this weekend's projects. Regardless of how our experience matches up with those expectations, it will be our attitudes and actions that will make the difference. How can the following verses shape your attitude and actions throughout this experience?

John 13:12-17

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. [13] "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. [14] Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. [15] I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. [16] I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. [NIV]

Romans 12:3

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. [NIV]

Philippians 2:5-8

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6] Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
[7] but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
[8] And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death--
even death on a cross! [NIV]

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, [NIV]

Take another look at how God worked last year: *"Last weekend we found ourselves at Lowe's and Home Depot quite a bit. Each time at the check stand the clerks acknowledged us as yet another one of "those guys" coming through. We had several opportunities to share*

with other customers about what the church was doing, and why. Fielding questions and sharing the church's mission were easier than we thought."

If someone were to ask you, "Why are you doing this project?" How could you answer them in light of these passages and this week's teaching?

If you served last year, how did your project line up with your expectations?

2. A goal we have at North Coast is to be a church that intentionally loves people so that they will see who Jesus is through our actions and words and then be drawn to Him. Read Matthew 5:13-16 and Colossians 3:23-24 and list any specific guidelines or tips that could influence our effectiveness in the weekend projects.

Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

[14] "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. [15] Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. [16] In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. [NIV]

Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, [24] since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. [NIV]

What does it look like to be "salt" and "light"?

What does it look like to work "with all your heart"?

3. Part of carrying out God's game plan is simply loving others and being a "light." As others notice that "light," what does 1 Peter 2:12 teach us about whose reputation we need to be concerned about?

1 Peter 2:12

Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. [NIV]

What other ways can we as individuals and as a church family make God look good?

TAKING IT HOME

1. It's incredible to think that we are God's "Plan A" to spread the Good News about Him. Along with that big assignment we also have big resources to help us out. God's presence and power are available to each of us through the Holy Spirit. We are simply asked to pray for open doors, contagious faith and clear communication. Take a few minutes and look back at Colossians 4:2-6 and use it as a prayer guide for the *Weekend of Service*.

Colossians 4:2-6

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. [3] And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. [4] Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. [5] Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. [6] Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.