

# House Group Notes

24<sup>th</sup> January 2017



## Ichthus Values, Characteristics & Distinctives Session 1

### Trinitarian: Father, Son & Holy Spirit

Very briefly introduce and explain the plan to look at Ichthus' values, characteristics & distinctives in house group.

If we are going to understand who we are and what we believe, then we must first understand who God is! Explain that this session aims to introduce and cover the Trinity briefly before providing a time to discuss and focus on the importance and implications of a relational God. If anyone would like to look at the Trinity in more detail, then we strongly recommend Roger Forster's book called "Trinity". Anyone can ask Joel & Caz if they'd like to borrow or buy a copy.

Read Ichthus' statement below about being "Trinitarian: Father, Son & Holy Spirit", and afterwards check that everyone has understood the terminology used e.g. "plurality" & "fellowship" (i.e. jointly participate, usually with a purpose):

*"We believe that our experience, the Bible and reason all point to one creator God who is a plurality and who made the diverse universe. The three persons of the Godhead exist in a state of mutual fellowship, relationship and sharing. Their mode of existence is loving communion, which is to be reflected in our lives together in his church. We are a relational movement because we have a relational God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - in loving relationship with us."*

**Distribute the following Trinitarian verses to read:**

**Genesis 1:26 (God using "us" to refer to Himself), Isaiah 6:8 (God using "us"), Matthew 3:16 & 17, Matthew 28:19, John 14:26, Acts 2:33, Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 1:17**

As you can see, the concept of God being more than one, of being a trinity of Father, Son & Spirit is found throughout the Bible. It is also clearly stated in lots of places that God is "one", for example James 2:19 (**read James 2:19**).

Just as we believe a person has three parts (body, soul/mind & spirit), so does God. It can be hard to grasp the concept of the Trinity, that ONE can be THREE at the same time, but hopefully these analogies can help e.g.

Water:

There is what's known as the "triple point" of water, where water can co-exist as water (liquid), steam (gas) and ice (solid) all at the same time at 0.01°C.

Maths:

1+1+1 does =3, but 1x1x1 =1!! So, although it can be hard to get our heads around, the Trinity is mathematically possible and therefore perfectly rational!!

Roger's book contains a total of sixteen analogies to help get our heads around the concept of the

Trinity. However, one of the best, most helpful and most important ways to understand God and the Trinity is in terms of relationship.

**Discuss: Have you ever wondered where this idea of relationship came from? Why do we relate to one another? What do you think?**

If God was just one, then how would the concept of relating to us come about? Why would He create us as relational beings that relate to Him and to one another too? Why would God be defined as love by John in 1 John 4:8? Love requires something or someone to be loved! So the Trinity explains how God is love, because they have always had each other to love.

On the other hand, if the Trinity were completely separate individual gods, then surely they would fight and vie for position, power and domination over each other. This is the case with all mainstream plural/multiple god beliefs/religions like with Hinduism, Norse gods, Roman gods, Greek gods and many indigenous tribal religions still today. Instead, we see Jesus submit to the will of the Father and be led by the Holy Spirit, each one serving, loving and submitting to one another. The love that defines God is the glue that binds the Trinity together, fundamental to who He is as Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

**So, since we are relational beings made in the image of a relational God, to whom should we relate to and why?**

The Lord, other parts of our church body, people who aren't Christians, etc.

**Do we relate in a different way to different people (mentioned above)?**

Yes...

We love, relate, fellowship and should submit entirely to the Lord. We love, relate, fellowship and submit to one another as Christians, preferring each other's needs, honouring one another and encouraging each other where needed.

**Should we submit in relationship to people who aren't Christians? Our neighbours? Police officers? The government?**

Yes! As long as it doesn't contradict the will of God.

**Read Acts 2:37-47**

**Focusing on 2:42-47 how are the members of the newly founded church relating to one another?**

**In what ways are they expressing the love of God for each other?**

Praying together; hearing the word together; taking communion; spent time together; all things in common; eating and meeting in each other's houses.

This is what the early church was doing straight after the Holy Spirit arrived. The Holy Spirit, and with it, the love of God was poured out into them and they loved God and each other. This was attractive and infectious, so the church grew.

Re-read Acts 2:47

**Do you see this Trinitarian relational love for one another expressed at Lee Green? If yes (hopefully it is a yes!!!), how? In what ways do we express the mutual relationship, fellowship & sharing seen in the Trinity?**

**Pray for more of God's love for our brothers and sisters in our Lee Green church family. That we may see one another through God's eyes of love and vision for what we can all become through Him.**