

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a



GROWTH GUIDE

Handout: 09/09/18

Study: 09/16/18

We Love Our Diversity

When I posted "I Go to Church with White People" on my blog, I was nervous. It was the first piece I'd written about racial issues. As an African American woman raised in the black church in South Carolina, my choice to worship at a predominantly white church was not normal. God, however, opened my eyes to the need for intentionally choosing a diverse community.

Embracing a community of faith that is diverse, trusting, and mutually submissive can humbly reveal much about God, and even more about ourselves. Diverse community can give us a clear lens to know and love God, plus help us understand our blind spots. This renewed vision compels us to love others well.

Multicultural small groups—those that are racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse—can be a catalyst to help us love our neighbors because they bring us close to "the other"—people who are different from us in some way. Simple proximity to "others" is a good first step.

We truly become a united people, though, through sacred moments together as a result of prayer, study, listening, and learning. Through the fellowship and community of diverse believers, our hearts are changed and we can re-enter a diverse and changing world again and again as reconciled, transformed, and renewed people who glorify God.

When a watching world sees true heart change, it's a compelling witness. This change begins by drawing close to God and embracing a diverse community. The Holy Spirit changes people, and he uses changed people to miraculously change other individuals, organizations (including the church), and the world.

We naturally value unity in sameness—intimate connections with those who are like us. But it isn't as natural to experience unity with "the other." In his letter to the church in Ephesus, Paul writes that unity in the body of Christ requires complete humility, the bond of peace, gentleness, patience, and bearing with each other in love (4:2-3). Although God has graced us with different gifts and callings, Paul's number one priority is that the church labors for unity in the faith, knowledge of the Son of God, and maturity in Christ (4:12-13). Christ is glorified and the church is edified when there is sound teaching on, leadership toward, and strong commitment to unity in the body of believers. By embracing diverse community, we learn to unite with one another and grow together in light of our differences.

Source: Diversity in Community Changes Us by Natasha Sistrunk Robinson

KEY VERSE

James 2:8

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; NKJV

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: James 2:1-9

Introduction

1. The author of the article on the cover lists some benefits of going to a diverse church. How has being part of a diverse church benefited you?
2. Why is it easy to show partiality to someone like you? Why is it a sin?

Tuesday: James 2:1; Philippians 2:3-5; John 4:1-26

We Follow The Example of Jesus

3. What are some ways you look out for the interests others at Capital? What are some ways others have looked out for your interests?
4. What can we learn from the way that Jesus interacted with the Samaritan woman at the well?

Wednesday: James 2:2-7; John 12:32; II Corinthians 5:18-20

We Provide A Welcoming Environment For Everyone

5. How does the cross draw all people to Christ?
6. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? How should that impact the way we welcome people at church?

Thursday: James 2:4,9; Genesis 1:26-27; Galatians 3:26-28

We Believe Prejudice Is Evil and Sinful

7. Since God created people in His image, where does prejudice come from?
8. How has Jesus made it possible for there to be no divisions among God's children?

Friday: James 2:8-9; Matthew 22:36-40; Proverbs 18:2,15

We Love Our Neighbors As Ourselves

9. What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?
10. What does it mean to love your CBC family as yourself?
11. Part of loving your church family is listening to them. Why is it important to listen to the experiences of people who might have different backgrounds than you?
12. God has blessed us with a diverse church family. What steps can you take to promote greater unity?