

Life Group Notes

Sunday 19 May 2019

Speaker: Liz Green & Glodine Munemo

Title: The Elephant at The Table

Passage: Acts 9: 1-19

We can welcome people into our homes and gather around tables, but the elephant that sits with us around the table is the issue of **trust**. Unless we start to trust one another, we will struggle to truly 'be together'.

In the story of Ananias and Saul, we see this struggle being worked out. Saul, a man with a history of hatred and persecution of Christians is struck blind when he encounters God whilst on his way to a city where he intends to arrest and imprison followers of Jesus.

A Christian man, Ananias is told by God to seek Saul out but is understandably reluctant given Saul's history. Ananias struggled to trust Saul given all that he had heard about him. Eventually Ananias obeys Gods' instruction, finds Saul and presents himself to a man of reputation and we read how Ananias' heart is changed such that he can call Saul a brother

Trust is hard, particularly if we have been hurt or damaged in the past. Trust can be hard to build with those that are different to us or who do things in a different way to us.

Why don't we trust?

Fear – fear of the unknown, fear rooted in history and pain of the past, fear as the bi product of prejudice

What is trust? Trust is difficult to define (see questions below!)

But it isn't automatic, Isn't easy, Isn't an obligation

How can we build trust?

Time – takes time to get to know people. Doesn't happen overnight. Often requires consistency.

Truth – see people through God's eyes, show ourselves to be truthful, show our true selves.

Grace – grace to forgive, grace to listen and learn, grace to invite in

The Spirit of God enabled Ananias to go to Saul, having said 'No'. The Lord speaks to Ananias and affirms that he is at work in Saul and therefore Ananias can trust God's instruction.

We are trusting God for our salvation and resurrection, surely therefore we can trust his instruction to move towards, be reconciled, live in relationship and unity with brothers and sisters who aren't like us?

Questions

1. Where has fear held you back from trusting others? Serious or trivial examples welcome!
2. What demonstrates trust to you / how do you define trust?
3. What can you do practically to show your true / authentic self to others at RFC?
4. Who has God put on your heart for you to invite or build trust with?
5. Which of Glodine's personal illustrations struck you/challenged you/can you identify with?