

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Faith Works

Questions written by Pastor Mark Collins

October 28, 2007



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Would you like to lead or host a small group? Go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/smallgroups/becomingaleaderorhost/> or contact Carolyn York at carolyn.york@therocksandiego.org or 619.764.5120.

Rock Relief - Please visit www.rockreliefsd.org for ways you can help those affected by the San Diego fires and see what has already been done.

For all other Rock events, please go <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MINISTRY PRAYER REQUESTS

As "small groupies," you are the heart and soul of this ministry--who better than you to lift up the Small Group Ministry in prayer? So, it's up to you, you can spend time in your small group praying for these things (weekly or occasionally), or you can pray during the week on your own time. And if you'd like to be added to our Pastor's Prayer Team, just let us know. Mark Collins, the Small Group Pastor, would love your prayers! We send out a monthly email of his personal and ministry prayer requests. Just contact Andy Rodgers at andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org. May God work through your prayers mightily!

Reaching the Lost: Please pray that God would continue to draw the lost both to the Rock and our small groups.

Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups: Pray for perseverance, wisdom, and guidance for our small group leaders as they lead their groups this fall season. Pray that our small groups would truly be a place to grow in deep relationship with God and one another.

Potential Small Group Leaders: Pray for those who have signed up over the last month expressing interest in leading and/or hosting a small group; training and deployment are the next steps.

Small Group Staff: Pray that God would renew our strength and give us His vision for small groups as we continue our planning for 2008.

The Rock Body: Let's give thanks for how God has moved in our church and community to come together and help those affected by the recent fires. Please also pray that our church body would continue to be a source of encouragement and support for those in need.

MEMORY VERSE

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing. James 1:1-4

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – FAITH WORKS

Text: James 2:14-26

Over the last week we've all seen horrible images that we'd like to soon forget. One of the most distressing sights is a wildfire out of control and a charred skeleton of a house that was once a home to someone. We've all seen the images, the scorched toys, the singed pictures and people digging around for just a few memories that they had taken for granted until their entire world was recently turned upside down. Despite the reality of a very difficult week, our community has seen some good things; I'd even dare to say great things. We've seen people at their best giving sacrificially beyond their abilities and even their means. We've heard stories of people who had been reluctant to "do something" who are now taking on big responsibilities because of the relief effort.

Have you ever noticed that after a crisis it's easy to return to the status-quo? Over the next couple of weeks there will be endless discussions on what went wrong and who's to blame. The stories that so inspired us will fade into our distant memory and we'll return to life as normal. The book of James describes the Christian life as an adventure, a great adventure of radical faith and obedience to God. James reminds us that the Christian life is not just "talking the talk," it's "walking the walk" on a daily basis. He encourages us to make our faith *work* by constantly touching other people's lives.

Getting Started

1. How has last week's events affected you emotionally, practically and/or spiritually?

Digging Deeper

Read James 2:14-26, paying special attention to vv. 15-17, 21-22, 25 and have three people in your group retell the Old Testament stories that illustrate the interaction between faith and works (see Genesis 22 and Joshua 2 and 6 to refresh your memory).

2. Read James 2:14-19.
 - a. In this first section James clearly says that faith without works is dead. What do you think James means by this?

- b. This week, what opportunities have you had to show that you have a living faith? Why do you think that mere intellectual agreement to the truth is not enough (v.19)?

- 3. Read James 2:20-24.
 - a. How was Abraham's faith made complete by what he did (vv. 21-24)?

 - b. Can you share about a time in your life when your obedience to God was costly? How did that change you?

- 4. Read James 2:25 and Joshua 2.
 - a. How did Rehab's belief affect her? And do you think her actions were because of fear or faith?

 - b. How has God spared your life up to this point in time? How can your life offer hope to others who feel like all is lost?

- 5. Read James 2:26.
 - a. How does James' closing analogy summarize his teaching on faith and actions?

 - b. James never says that works without faith can save. What does this imply about faith (see Ephesians 2:8-10).

- 6. *Faith that Works*: As a group, can you describe what saving faith looks like? How do you respond when the beliefs and actions of others are far apart? In what ways do you need to bring your actions more in line with your beliefs?

Bringing it Home

- 7. Homework: Reflect on your life in the past 7-10 days. How has it been different? Did this week's crisis bring out the best or the worst in you? Take some time to write down some situations in which what you said or did didn't match up to what you believe. Ask God to forgive you, change you and make you more like Him. Also include the situations where you clearly lived out your faith. Thank Him for your growth.