

Grace Nurtured – Discussion Guide and Questions

Baptist Hui Main Session #9, Dunedin, 5 November 2016.

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Watch the video online www.lifelonglearning.nz/grace-nurtured (46 minutes). It can easily be watched in two sittings, as split up below:

Christ's church is often described in the New Testament as a community where NURTURING GRACE is experienced. The Holy Spirit forms a people that can be described as:

- a body that is to be built up, grown up, matured and equipped (Eph. 4:11-16)
- a bride that is loved, cleansed, nourished and cherished (Eph. 5:25-29)
- a field that is planted, watered and grows (1 Cor. 3:5-9)
- branches of a fruitful vine (John 15:1-8)
- a flock that is protected, cared for and fed (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet. 5:1-3, John 21:15-17),
- a household where members are accepted, disciplined and trained (Gal 3:26-29, 1 Thess. 2:11-12)

The consistent message is that Christ pours out his Spirit upon the church in which we receive rich, NURTURING GRACE. Put another way, GRACE grows churches that transform and nurture people.

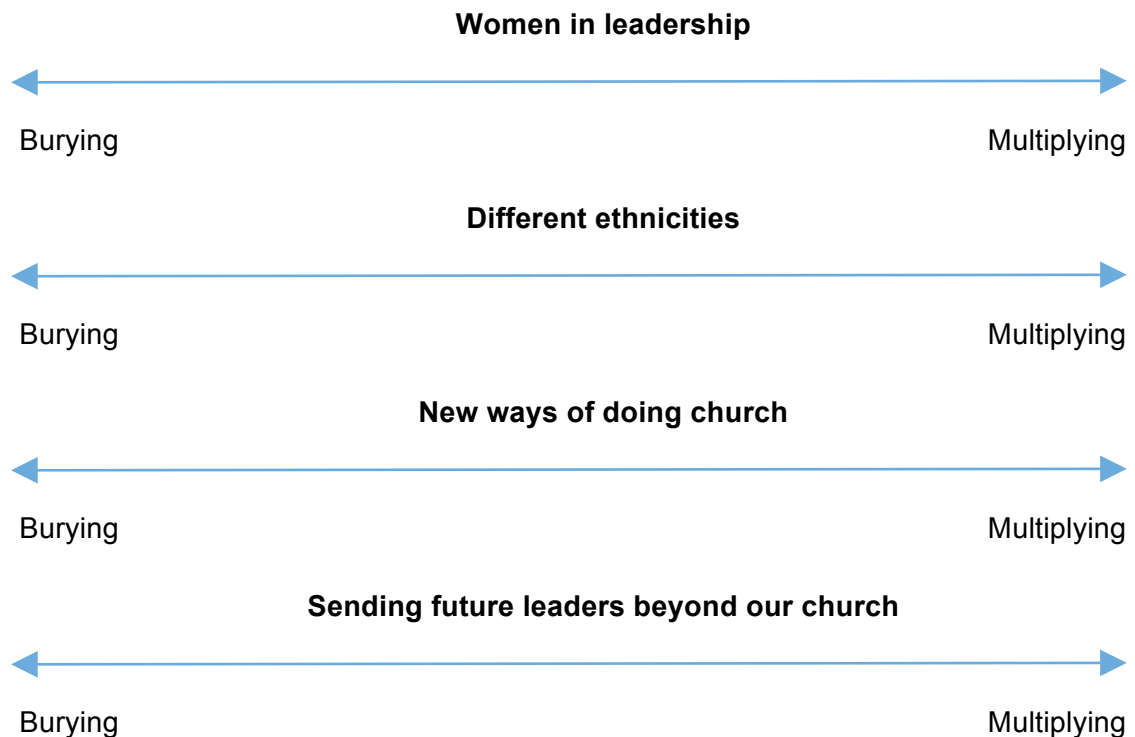
God's NURTURING GRACE is also expressed in the church through the way he gives gifts. Gifts of grace have been bestowed on every member of the Body and we are called to value and nurture them. A faithful church will honour God by multiplying his investment of grace gifts. A strong nurturing church will be welcoming, investing, releasing and inspiring all of God's people for the service that each is given to fulfil for the glory of God and the realization of His Kingdom.

Session 1: Multiplying the Treasure of Grace (00.00-17.30 mins)

The theme of Grace Nurtured is explored through the parable of the Treasures (Matthew 25:14-30). As Charles points out, everything God gives us (our possessions, our abilities, our opportunities, our time, our circumstances), he commands us to steward well. Two options are presented: play it safe and achieve nothing, or actively work to multiply the treasure.

1. Think of one way in which you have felt nurtured by God's grace and share that with your group.
2. Charles suggests that this parable applies to all of us who neglect actively exercising our gifts and opportunities for service to Jesus and the Kingdom. That it applies to all of us who are determined to retain the status quo and avoid risk and change - to substitute security for service. What are your thoughts about this?

3. The Holy Spirit gave us four specific challenges at our 2016 Baptist HUI. On the spectrum, assess where your own church might be at with these:



4. Discuss your assessment and highlight which one you would most love to see multiplied in your church.

Session 2: Building a culture of Nurturing Grace (17.30-46.00 mins)

In discussing the heart of a nurturing church, Jonny suggests four key qualities that should be observable: Welcome, Investment, Release & Inspiration.

1. **Welcoming Difference:** Discuss the statement, “I wonder if welcoming difference is one of the highest values of your church?”
2. **Invest in Surprising Places:** In the story Charles told, Pretty was very visible and yet Charles still had to make a choice to notice her. Who are the people in your church that are seen but not noticed? Who is missing out on the INVESTMENT of nurturing grace in your church?
3. **Release our Potential:** In each of our churches there are groups of people who are not being empowered to their potential. Identify one such group in your church and think of ways that their treasure can be multiplied.
4. **Inspire Me:** Jonny wonders, “How did I take a radicle Gospel that is all about Jesus and twist it into something that is all about me?” Charles laments that “we are not giving a big enough vision...a gospel to die for.” Discuss together what being a disciple means to you and how that is being nurtured in your church.