

Small Group Notes: Pembury Baptist Church, 16th May 2010

Children Matter

Series: Special One Off Sermon

THE BIG IDEA:

Investing in our children is not only essential for the health of the church and its future effectiveness, but more importantly, it is something Jesus requires us to do and led by his own example.

OPENING ICE-BREAKER

Ask your group: what are their memories of church as a child? If they didn't go to church, what things did they particularly enjoy as a child? Why do you think it's important that children enjoy church?

BIBLE READING:

Mark 10:13-16

THOUGHTS:

- Every church and every culture has to ask the question, 'What shall we do with the children?'
- Research on our society shows that while parents and churches tend to focus on their own survival and needs, children often get lost in the shuffle and suffer the consequences of benign spiritual neglect.
- In Mark 10 we see Jesus up-end social convention by how he treated the children.
- The disciples tried to keep the children away – but Jesus was angry about this.
- Jesus gave all who listened the instructions that children are meant to be able to come to Jesus, without hindrance.
- Jesus told us to learn from children because they show us how to receive the Kingdom of God. We must remember that like children, we come to God openly, trustingly, not relying on our own achievement or merit but on what he has done for us.
- Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them.
- Jesus gave the children:
 - **Time** – he was busy, but he interrupted his plans for children
 - **'You Matter'** – through what Jesus did, they learned that they mattered
 - **He gives them to God** – he blesses them, something we must all do.
- When a church asks, 'What do we do with the children?' its answer needs to be in line with how radical Jesus was in his treatment of them. Consequently, PBC decided over a year ago to radically overhaul its children's ministry and launch 'Promiseland – the best hour of every child's week.'
- Wayne said that on a Sunday, Promiseland is as important as what we do when we gather as adults. It is also an essential block in helping us to reach out to families.
- This ministry needs our full support, in prayer, time and finances.
- Wayne asked every person to go on the Promiseland Tour – to see it in action.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Wayne said 'One way God measures the health of us as a church is how we treat our children and our elderly?'
2. Jesus said that children are meant to be able to come to Jesus, without hindrance. How might churches hinder children coming to Jesus? What does Promiseland already do that removes these hindrances?
3. How can we as a church help children to discover their gifts and who God has made them to be?
4. How do you think Jesus feels about children when they are exploited?
5. How can we give our own children over to God, when we care so much about them?
6. Whether or not you 'like' children, are there ways you can support Promiseland as a key ministry of PBC?
7. What would you say to the person who says, 'Promiseland – is it really worth it...?'

VERSES TO LEARN:

Mark 10:14. "He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them...'"

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Can you give time to Promiseland?

Can you sign up to the Promiseland Tour?

How else could you support Promiseland?

Are there other ways you can champion children outside of PBC?