



Life Group Study Notes

"Gates & Doors:

Opening our hearts and lives to the King of glory"

Ps. Jim Laffoon - February 12, 2017

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- Have you ever been locked out of your house? What did you do to get back in?
- What are some of the characteristics of the kind of people you like to spend time with?
- Do you have a best friend? How long have you been friends? What do you do to keep the friendship close?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org.

Psalm 24:7-10 ESV *Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!*

This likely refers to the historical event when King David brought God's Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem.

God used these verses to encourage Ps Jim Laffoon regarding the season we are in as a church. As we will soon move into our new facilities, we must be aware that God is wanting us to open up to him afresh, both corporately and individually.

Corporately

Ephesians 4:16 ESV *[F]rom whom (Jesus) the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

God wants all of us to fully engage in building his body up.

Two ways we are all called to build up the church are as follows:

- **Pray** - Every one of us is called to pray on behalf of our fellow believers. When we do, not only does God answer our prayers, but we grow in compassion and love for one another.
- **Participate** - Every one of us is called to participate by financial giving and the sharing of our resources, and by serving one another.

Individually

Revelation 3:20 ESV *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*

Jesus spoke these words to the believers at the ancient city of Laodicea. He was challenging them and rebuking them for their self-sufficiency and consequent lack of spiritual hunger and fervor.

God is challenging us to be spiritually hungry for him. He is knocking at the door of each of our hearts, wanting us to open up in order to commune with him. To do this we need to do four simple things.

- **Realize** - God is standing at the door. We must be aware of the fact that God is wanting to get our attention. God will send us signals. He may reveal his presence to us while we are seeking him in prayer, worship, or the Scriptures. He may do it when we don't expect it. He may send us new blessings in our lives. He may impart his burden to us, so that we feel troubled about things that trouble him. He may give us dreams or wake us up in the night.
- **Recognize** - God is knocking at the door. We must discern his voice when he speaks to us. If we will turn our attention to him when he reaches out to us, we can expect him to speak to us. Often when he speaks, it is not loud or long at first. He may speak some words which we hear in our hearts or in our minds. He may cause a biblical text to come alive in a fresh, immediate way. He may communicate something vivid and clear to us through our imagination as we think about him in relation to some situation. We must be alert to his voice however he may speak to us.
- **Respond** - We must open the door to God. We must give an appropriate, honoring response to God when he speaks to us. We must answer him with our "amen," our "yes, Lord." We may need to immediately stop what we are doing, and give our full attention to him. We may need to simply be still and listen with our hearts. We may need to get our Bible out and begin to read and ponder and ask God questions. We may need to get a journal out and begin to write down what God is speaking to us. We may need to set our resolve to follow through and do something specific that would be an act of obedience to what he is saying.
- **Relate** - We must sit down and "eat" with the Lord. We must relate to God heart to heart. We should not only come to God when we have needs we wish for him to address. We must also learn to become intimate with God just for the sake of enjoying him. He is our loving, gracious Creator, and he desires to commune with each of us.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.

- Has God been knocking on the door of your heart? How has he been reaching out to you?
- What could hinder you from responding to the Lord when he calls you to open up to him and spend time with him? What can you do to overcome these hindrances?
- In what ways do you connect with God the most? How do you most easily connect with God?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Ask God for forgiveness for any recent lack of response to him.
- Ask God to speak afresh to you and to reveal himself in a greater way to you.
- Ask God to guide all of us into a greater, richer relationship with him.