

Study Guide: Holiness – We are a Holy Community

1. Read Leviticus 19:2, Isaiah 6:2-3, 1 Peter 2:9
What words or pictures come to mind when you hear the word holy/holiness?
Share them with each other.
2. How do you feel about defining holy/holiness as 'separate' or 'set apart'? What are the strengths and/or weaknesses of thinking of holy/holiness in this way?
3. What is your response to former Pope Benedict's quotes from Introduction to Christianity:

Jesus' holiness expressed itself precisely as mingling with the sinners who Jesus drew into his vicinity. He has drawn sin to Himself, made it his lot and so revealed what true holiness is, not separation, but union, not judgment but redeeming love.

Is there not revealed in the unholy holiness of the Church, as opposed to man's (people's) expectation of purity, God's true holiness which is love, love which does not keep its distance in an aristocratic untouchable purity but mixes with the dirt of the world to overcome it

4. You may choose to re-read Luke 15 at this point (or maybe ask people to read it in advance of house-group.
I suggested that in response to the charge in verse 2 that He (and by extension His community) is failing at holiness. Jesus in the 3 parables highlights: i. God's universal love, ii. God's unfailing love (bearing with one another) and iii. God's uncontainable love (joy/generosity/risk taking). Why do you think He does this?
5. Can you think of practical examples where we at Hill Cliffe demonstrate these aspects of holiness (universal/unfailing/uncontainable love)? Take a moment to give thanks for these activities.
6. Universal Love
 - i. Who are we being called as a community to reach out to and what does that look like?

Unfailing Love

 - ii. What does bearing with each other with love look like in practice? How do we measure up?

Uncontainable Love

 - iii. How might we as a community have more joy in who God is and what He has done?
 - iv. Are we a community whose heart overflows with kindness and desire to bless?
 - v. Are there any specific areas where you feel God is calling us to take risks in order to love people better?