KING'S CHURCH EDINBURGH (http://kingschurchedinburgh.co.uk/)

Loving The Church

Read the main passage: **Ephesians 5: 22-33**

Also look at: **Revelation 19 :6-7 & Rev 21:2-3**

We need to understand and see how precious the church is to God. We can diminish the importance of the church in God's eyes, partly due to our own bad experiences that we've had with imperfect people within the church. It is easier to open oneself up to God the father, son and Holy Spirit as they are perfect, they will never sin against you, or let you down. The church is made up of people like you and me that God is still working on. They will fail, sin, and come short.

When we look at what Paul is saying in*Ephesians 5*, we see that Christ gave his life for the church, his bride to be. There is nothing more valuable to God on earth than His church, His people. The Bride of Christ, as John sees her in Revelation, is the pearl of great price that he sold all he had to purchase her. He purchased her with his own blood. This high view of the church, Christ's bride, should stir us to have an equally high value of the church.

Matthew looked at 3 points that we often neglect in this area. 1) Speaking well of other churches that are slightly different to ours 2) Having a corporate community mindset rather than a individualistic one; valuing those that are different to us in the local church that we're in. 3) Falling in love again with the local church.

Questions:

- When you look at the importance that God gives the church in the bible, in particular in Revelation as his bride, do you think that we can minimise her value

and standing? How can we grow in our love of the church, the bride of Christ?

- There are times when we get hurt through the local church, which can cause us to disengage from being part of a local community of believers, choosing a more individualistic relationship with God. Why is it so important that we don't do this, and how can we encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ to fall in love again with the church?
- At times we can get 'exclusive' in not valuing other churches in our city. Many are quite different to us in lots of ways; how can we keep a good attitude, and be inclusive of them?
- To be a church for all, we are going to attract many people who have little in common with you, apart from loving Christ. What ways help us to integrate better, and show the love of Christ for each other in our local community of believer's in King's?
- God is using our local church to 'iron out' some of our wrinkles, so that He can present us to Christ 'holy and blameless' (see Eph 5:26-27) What is the best way, that many of you have learnt on the members course, that God accomplishes that? A true loving of each other means....?

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