"New Covenant People"

Luke 22:7-20

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell

Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Group Study Introduction

Use the following questions and exercises as your group time allows. Feel free to skip one or more questions in each section as necessary. If you have less then thirty minutes for group discussion, we recommend skipping the "Getting Started" section. Be sure to save time for prayer at the end of your meeting, using the "Strength through Prayer" section.

Getting Started:

The background for this segment of Strength for the Journey is the Last Supper, particularly Jesus' words, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20).

- When you were a child, what were your feelings about church in general and the practice of Communion in particular?
- Do you struggle with your participation in Communion being too familiar and routine? If so, do you have any ideas on how to correct that?

Strength through Scripture:

Open your Bibles to Luke 22 and have a volunteer read verses 7–20 out loud.

1. Why would the disciples react with great excitement to Jesus' announcement that the new covenant was arriving?

2. As Jesus went on to give the "Upper Room Discourse" (recorded in John 13–17), why would the disciples be traumatized by Jesus' subsequent announcement that He was leaving to give His life for the sins of the world?

3. Have one group member read out loud John 14:15–17 and another John 16:5–7. Why would it be to the disciples' advantage for Jesus to go away and send the Holy Spirit to them?

Notes:

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."
Luke 22:20b

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4. Now have a group member read 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. How do you respond to Paul's statement here?

5. Is it easier for you to think of God's "temple" or "house" as a reference to your church—rather than as a reference to you?

Digging Deeper:

If your group has enough time (i.e., you've listened to the audio on your own), answer one or more of these optional questions.

1. What does Joe Stowell mean by saying that the replacement of the old covenant with the new covenant is really good news for "performance-based Christians"?

2. How does the new covenant liberate us from the externalism that deceives us and defiles us with pride?

3. What are some key events within the story of the Bible that illustrate the fact that God has always wanted to dwell with His people?

Strength through Sharing:

1. In what way do you need to establish a guard (e.g., on your "eye gate" or "ear gate") to protect the holiness of your life as God's temple?

2. How different would your life be if you wore a little sign that said, "God lives here"?

Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments as a group in silent, personal prayer. Thank God that, as a result of the new covenant, he sets up His temple in us! And make a commitment to live accordingly—honoring and glorifying Him.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

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"Thank You, Father, for making me a temple of the Holy Spirit. I want to honor you by what I allow to come into this temple, and also by what comes out. Help me to do so—in Jesus' name."

When you are finished with this time for silent, personal prayer, you may want to move into a time of group prayer, praying for one another.

Closing Call to Action:

1. Be careful what you put in your life—the temple of the Holy Spirit. As the Old Testament temple was closely guarded to keep it holy, set some sentinels or guards (e.g., on your "eye gate" or "ear gate") to insure that what goes in builds on a setting where a holy relationship can take place.

2. It's not only important what goes into this temple, but also what goes out. What comes out of the temple in words, actions, and activities certainly ought to reflect the indwelling God who lives in us rather than contradicting Him.

3. Don't get into the wrong thinking that you are only in God's house when you are at church. We are God's house. When we go to church, we take God's house into church; when we leave church, we take God's house out of church. We must understand this high privilege: In no other time in the history of God's work on this planet has He chosen to dwell in His people.

Notes:

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