

PARRAMATTERS

SUNDAY 30 AUGUST 2020

Parramatta Salvation Army



COMMUNITY MATTERS:

BEING A CHRIST CENTERED COMMUNITY

AUGUST X FACTOR

This is our last Sunday for our corps' X Factor month. If you haven't yet met with a 'huddle' its not too late. The discipleship journey was meant to be shared so take this opportunity to 'huddle' as we together learn more about being a Christ centred community.

WEEK FIVE

HUDDLES **2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-21**

This week in your huddle:

1. discuss sermon — use questions
2. share one thing you plan to do to build up the church community
3. pray for each other and the corps

QUESTIONS FOR HUDDLES

1. What does 'reconciliation' mean to you?
2. What does a 'ministry of reconciliation' look like?
3. How might 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 provide a basis for our vision for our corps?

PRAYER POINTS

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Pray for our X Factor month; for fellowship, for learning, for new revelations.



This week we will be praying for the wider Salvation Army community we share ministry with in Western Sydney: Ashish & Sandra Pawar, Edward Conteh [Auburn Corps Officers], Amanda & Greig Whittaker [Ryde Corps Leaders], Louise Beamish [Blacktown Corps Officer], Leslie Archer [Parramatta Courts] and Robyn Black [Area Officer].



Praying for Sarah Walker as she starts this week as 'Cadet in Appointment' and continues her training at Parramatta Corps.



Remember those in our corps community who are facing health challenges and need our prayerful support, especially with the extra caution required due to the coronavirus. We are pleased to hear that Ross Duncan is home from hospital and are praying for his recovery. Val Palmer has also been in hospital this week.



Keep praying for the completion certificate to be issued for 426 Church Street.



If there is someone or something you would like us to pray for please contact the office by Tuesday for it to be included in the newsletter.

VISION FOR THE X COMMUNITY



REFLECT & SHINE

Taken from "Building a Discipleship Culture" by Mike Breen

PERMISSION TO BE UNPRODUCTIVE

Imagine a pendulum swinging in rhythm - back and forth, to and fro. Think of one end of the pendulum being fruitfulness and the other end as abiding. We can't have one without the other. We abide in Christ, then go forth to bear fruit. We bear fruit; then we are pruned back and enter a time of abiding. Rest, work, work, rest. It is a rhythm we see in nature as well.

JOHN 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener... this is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

Fruitfulness happens in stages and seasons: abide, grow, bear fruit, prune, abide. This the rhythm of the swinging pendulum. It's really all about timing. We cannot bear fruit if we do not spend time abiding. But we cannot simply stay put in the abide mode, for a branch that doesn't eventually bear fruit will be cut off and cast into the fire.



It is interesting that nowhere in this text is growth mentioned. Growth seems to be the result of the right rhythm being established. Growth is not the same as bearing fruit. We must grow before we can see fruit. Grape vines are pruned back and forced not to bear fruit for two to three years so that their root systems can be established. Growth must happen before fruit is produced. And growth come from knowing how to abide.

At the time of Jesus' incarnation, a vine would be cultivated, planted and left to grow for three years before being allowed to bear fruit. Every time it tried to bring forth a bunch of grapes, it would be cut back. After the third year, the grapes would be allowed to grow on their own. By then the branches were strong enough to support the weight of the grapes without breaking. After the harvest, the



branches were pruned back for a time of nourishment and rest, before the fruit-growing season began again.

Bearing fruit is the most natural thing for a branch. It doesn't do it by straining to push out a grape. Looking at our lives, however, it would seem producing fruit-making disciples is strenuous. If fruit bearing is not coming naturally in our lives, could it be that we have not spent the proper season abiding? Could it be that we are overgrown branches, too weak to support a single grape, let alone a bunch?

Pruning is not the fun part of life. We seldom see churches displaying banners advertising "40 Days of Pruning" or small groups practicing "pruning yourself into a better life." But if a grapevine is not pruned regularly, the branches grow spindly and weak. There is no abiding time when they can gain their strength for the growing season.

We need to learn when it is our pruning time. This seems unproductive at first glance. After all, aren't we supposed to be pressing forth with all our energy to do the work of the kingdom? In a word, no. We are supposed to pattern our lives after that of Jesus. It is not our energy and determination that impresses God, it is our living in the manner he made us that will produce the fruit he intends for us to bear. Pruning is not automatic for the branch. Left to its own plans, it would continue to grow, increasing in size but decreasing in strength, endurance, and health until it would be unable to hold the fruit it is intended to bear.

We need to have time of pruning in our churches, times when most, if not all, activity ceases. Times of rest and abiding. This runs contrary to principles taught in most church growth courses and seminars! But in this time of abiding, great strength is given to those who are involved in the ministry of the church. Without a time for the spiritual ground to lie fallow, there will be a poor harvest in the year to come.

From abiding we grow, from growing we bear fruit, from bearing fruit we are cut back. When the Lord is moving you into a time of pruning and abiding, surrender to him. There is much grace to be found in the place of abiding.

If you would like to give to the kingdom building activities in and through our Corps by transfer please use the following details: **BSB 032078; Account No. 000810288; Account Name - The Salvation Army, Parramatta.** Please include an applicable reference on the transfer so we can accurately record the gift.

If you would like to receive the newsletter by email please send your details to parramatta.corps@gmail.com

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