

Building Community *This is how they will know you are my disciples...*

2. Challenges to Community - Change

All Churches Face Challenges...

On a large piece of paper draw 3 columns, then as a group discuss:

- From the Bible what challenges are you aware of that the early church faced?
- What challenges would you say churches in the UK typically face today?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges we face at Kings in building a healthy church community?

What strikes you when you look at all these issues?

The Challenge of Change

1.
 - a. Think about your small group and small groups that you have been in the last two or three years. How much change has there been? Who has come and who has gone? *(If it helps make a list.)*
 - b. What would you say are the benefits and costs (or pro's and con's) of this constant change in our church community?
2.
 - a. Emotionally, how do you respond to this kind of change? Is it easier to respond to change that happens for good reasons (e.g. growth vs failure of a group or decline)?

- b. What are the consequences likely to be for us as a community if we allow our emotions to dictate how we react to it?
 - c. Who, in the church family, do you think it is probably hardest for?
 - d. What suggestions do you have for how we might value and support those people who are coming and going in particular?

3. One complaint from church youth workers is that they invest time, energy and love in discipling their young people only to have them go to university and rarely return home afterwards.
 - a. From our point of view what would you say to encourage them, and how might we see our own role in building for the kingdom of God?
 - b. How might a perspective like this help us to handle the changes we face every year in both the student and resident congregations?

Welcoming and Releasing People

4. If there is anyone in your cell who has arrived at Kings in the last 2 or 3 years, ask them what their experiences of that have been? What has been good/hard?
5. If your circumstances were to change and you had to leave Durham and Kings, how would you like people to respond to that? When people from your cell have moved on how have you tended to mark that?

continued

6. The Bible gives us some examples of people being welcomed into and released from church communities. Consider the following passages and reflect on what we might learn about how to do these 2 things in a positive, Christ-like way. *(You might like to divide the group into 2 or more and ask them to take one of the following each and feed back their thoughts to the group.)*

- **Welcoming** - Acts 16.11-15, Romans 16.1-3, Colossians 4.7-10, Hebrews 13.1-2
- **Releasing** - Acts 13.1-3, Acts 20.36-8, Titus 1.4-5 and Titus 3.12-13

Spend some time praying for:

- Those you know who are new or have left
- For wisdom for the leadership team as they constantly have to consider the ways we structure the church as it grows
- For the church community as a whole - for an ethos of generosity, hospitality and God's grace as we deal with this challenge
- For those individuals in the cell who particularly find this difficult