We Went Camping!

Lindsay Jaftha 24 April 2017



There is nothing better than camping together if you are wanting to build unity and faith in a group of people. Our Covenant Life Church leaders camp at the end of March 2017 was no exception – it felt as if God took 3 days and moved us forward 3 years! It's like one of those inspirational sports story movies, where the coach takes a rag tag bunch of misfits and turns them into a team that in the end wins the championship game.

God really does something special when hearts are united for His purpose; when loving Jesus and advancing the Kingdom is what brings a group of people together. That is what He's done with the CLC leadership team. Some would say that you probably couldn't pick a more mismatched group of people if you tried, but in God, it works. On our leaders camp we were challenged, stretched, encouraged and inspired to run the race hard together and in the end, for me, it came down to a seemingly simple question: how much am I willing to sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom? How much of myself am I willing to give to a God who gave it all for me? This was a huge challenge for me, because it is very easy to say the right things, even sing the right things to Him in worship, but when I really take a deeper look at myself, the more I see how I hold things back.

> **And the more I listen to what I'm singing, the more I realise how I fall short of this bold prayer, every day.**

One of my favourite song lines goes: 'You can have it all, Lord, every part of my world. Take this

life and breathe on this heart that is now Yours'. And the more I listen to what I'm singing, the more I realise how I fall short of this bold prayer, every day. It feels like sometimes it's more a case of me giving God what's left of my life after I've used the best parts for my own purposes, and the reality of that breaks my heart. There's always been an acceptable and an unacceptable sacrifice to God, and without love, nothing is acceptable to Him. Malachi 1:14 says, 'Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations'. Ananias and Sapphira vowed to give God everything they had and were struck dead for holding back what they promised.

God wants my first and my best.

I'm amazed and so thankful that He doesn't strike me dead every time I sing that song. Sometimes it feels like an insurmountable task, as if I will never reach that standard, but it has changed the way I pray and sing. When I sing that song now, it has become a cry of my heart, a prayer to ask God to get me there, because I can't do it on my own. When I don't feel like giving of myself, when I want to hold back and keep something for myself, I ask God again to give me the ability to give it all. I pray that my life would be marked by the knowledge that my every decision – where I live, what church I go to, how I spend my money – would come down to how does it advance the Kingdom of God? Where is the Kingdom of God? It's where the King reigns and has dominion.

> **God wants my first and my best.**

I believe that it makes God really happy when He sees His people unified in advancing His Kingdom. When our hearts are united in one purpose to give all of ourselves to see Him glorified. I believe that's what happened over our leaders camp weekend: a commissioning of His people to see His Kingdom come into our lives and city, and a commitment to love Him with all of our hearts, and love each other too. Yes, it's going to be costly, but I really believe (and the Bible says so too) that any sacrifice is so worth it.

*Since this article was first published, Covenant Life Church has become part of City on a Hill Church.