

Sunday Assembly Reflection

WRITTEN BY: Robin Russell

REFLECTION: Diann Garnett encouraged the church to be hopeful in the midst of a heavy week, when a sniper – enraged by the shootings of two black men by police in Minnesota and Louisiana -- ambushed and killed five police officers and injured six in Dallas. It's easy to feel hopeless in light of racism, injustice and violence, but Diann reminded the church that we have the very life of God within us. When we don't know what to do, we should remember what it looks like to be devoted to Jesus. The early church modeled such devotion by learning about God's ways and being transformed by them; participating in the life of God together; sharing the Lord's Supper, which overcomes racial and social barriers; and praying together. These practices shaped the disciples' lives and prompted them to reach out and share God's love and life. In times of chaos, fear and brutality, the church offered social solidarity, works of charity and a sense of family for the oppressed and hurting. As a result, Acts records that God added to their numbers and they had favor with all the people.

Diann said the early church didn't sit around waiting for God to bring others to them. Instead, they were out in the streets with the suffering and hurting. We have to get out and be the life of Christ in our neighborhoods. As an introvert, I began to feel overwhelmed at this, thinking I have to hit the pavement for Jesus: maybe feed and clothe the homeless; join a protest or prayer gathering regarding racism and injustice; or befriend refugees in our city. Then Diann said this is not meant to be burdensome, that we were created to enjoy God and to do good. It's in our DNA! We do this when we find a place where people are hurting, and as we minister to them, we experience the life of God flowing through us. For me, that's offering spiritual care to hospice patients. Participating in the devotional practices of the church enables me to "get out" of my comfort zone and offer the love and compassion of Jesus to the dying, regardless of their faith, race or social status. To what good work is He calling you?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *Please pick one of the questions below to answer in your small groups; more if you have time. Be sure to pray for each other at the end.*

- Diann said God uses His people to be answers to their own prayers. What human suffering prompts compassion in you? How might you become part of the solution?
- Jesus gave two basic commands: "Fear not" and "Love your neighbor." Which is most difficult for you, and why?

Sunday Assembly Reflection is written by Lake Highlands Church members for Lifegroups and individuals to receive more from the spoken Sunday Assembly message through reflection and quick discussion. It is published on the first three Monday's of the month. If you are interested in knowing more about a Lifegroup or have a question about the reflection, please contact Donjalea Crane, donjalea@lakehighlandschurch.org or contact one of our Lifegroup leaders by going to lakehighlandschurch.org/Lifegroup-listings.

Lake Highlands Church Sunday Assembly Sermons are published weekly as a podcast. They are available on iTunes and lakehighlandschurch.org.