

Small Group Material - Fruitfulness on the Frontline

Moulding Culture - Col 3.1-11

Welcome (10 mins)

Today, we're looking at Moulding Culture. This is about seeing how we might contribute to cultural change on our frontlines, so that they become places where people better flourish. One definition of culture is 'the way we do things round here'.

Together, can you briefly think of a few things that are part of the culture of your own small group? (You might find it helpful to ask yourself what a newcomer to your group would think and find.)

Worship (10 mins) *Put a lit candle in the centre of the circle.*

Invite everyone to write down on a Post-it note (in quiet), one aspect of God's character which they are grateful for. Then ask them to place their Post-it note before the candle with a simple prayer to God. Sing 'Mighty to Save' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CDDE6aFS-A

Word (Total of about 45 mins)

PLAY FILM to pause point - approx. 5 mins 30 secs

In a moment of quiet, think about the culture of one of your frontlines. What are some of the positive and negative aspects of the way things are done there? **Write down your thoughts as you will need to refer back to these later.**

Resume FILM to end - approx. 4 mins

Questions to discuss after the full film (10 mins)

'Culture is the way we do things round here...the stories we tell, the rituals we perform, the rewards that we give, the heroes we admire, the slogans we repeat.' Mark Greene

In the story of Elaine the headteacher, why do you think the original blame culture was bad for: a) the staff? b) The children?

What do you think were some of the Christian values that inspired Elaine to instigate the change that she did?

Elaine first exemplified the change that she wanted to see. This brought others along with her. Are there already some things you try to do to go against a negative aspect of your frontline culture?

Read Colossians 3.1-11 (20 mins)

When we become a Christian, a totally different set of values is now in play. These values which characterise those who belong to God's kingdom inevitably impact the world around us.

1. What changes in identity and status does Paul say **has happened** to these Colossians Christians? v1-4, 7, 9-11
 2. How much contrast is there between the 'old nature' and the nature of 'God's chosen people'? Can you describe some of these contrasts?
 3. How does 'setting our hearts and our minds on things above' (v1-2) help us make the changes Paul urges us to?
- How might the way Christians live affect their different contexts?

Application exercise in Pairs (10 mins)

Share with a partner a summary of what you wrote down about your frontline culture.

Is there one particular negative thing about the culture of your frontline that you would love to see change? Can you together think of a Kingdom antidote to it? How might God use you to start to bring about change?

Thank God for what is positive in your frontline culture. Pray for each other that God will give you the wisdom, faith and courage to start influencing the culture of your frontline for his glory so that 'people can better flourish'.

Witness - A Takeaway Action (5 mins)

This week: Ask a couple of people on your frontline what they think is good and not so good about the culture of your frontline. Their responses might spur you to action and may even open up opportunities for a conversation about the Christian faith!

Take a moment to reflect on this quote, then pray it aloud together.

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Reinhold Niebuhr