

Excerpts for contemplation, discussion and application from this week's issue of THE LOOKOUT.

Welcome Gifts (pages 3-5)

"Some things will never be automated, but will be done best by one caring, unhurried person who notices another's need and meets that need spontaneously and cheerfully."

- Does this statement remind you of anyone? Why?

"Research shows that most people need many touches every day."

- Why do you think we are designed with this need?

"It's the gesture of generosity and the time you share together that provide an opportunity to know someone and be known."

- When was such a gesture extended to you? What effect did it have?

"Self-reliance is the great American virtue. Unfortunately, our resources often deprive us of opportunities to get to know our neighbors."

- How has self-reliance affected your dealings with others?

Signs of a Healthy Church (pages 6 & 7)

"Corporate worship is not a matter of going from one item to another, but of promoting love and good deeds."

- According to this statement, in what ways is your worship service effective? In what ways could it be improved?

"Healthy churches aren't afraid of emotion. Christians embrace each other because they really care about one another."

- Do you agree with this statement? How would you rephrase it?

Churches that Heal the Soul (pages 8 & 9)

"How can the church follow the Lord's example and become a fellowship where healing occurs?"

- Suggest three ways for your church.

"When Christians confide in each other, they show authenticity, build trust, and strengthen relationships."

- What other benefits come from confession? What dangers result from its neglect?

- On a scale of one to 10, how safe do you feel practicing confession in your small group? To whom do you feel safe confessing?

2 4 6

Get healthy!

How healthy is your group? Are you closer to Jesus than you were a month or a year ago? Are you encouraged or discouraged?

As the body and bride of Christ, we have been given some amazing resources to heal our wounds and help us grow. We have an all-powerful Father who passionately loves us beyond the power of language to express. We have the glorious risen Christ interceding for us. We have God the Holy Spirit focused intently on growing us up to be like Jesus, empowering us to press into relationship with him, to be in unity with one another, to go and preach and make disciples. We have the Bible, God's incredible love letter, as a guide. We have the fellowship of believers, and a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1), providing us with teaching, example, and encouragement.

God has placed no limits on how "healthy" we can become; no ceiling for our spiritual growth. The only limit is Christ's perfection, and this is the very peak to which he calls us.

So let's ask ourselves: how healthy do we want to be?

Let us hear from you.

We'd like to see "246" used as a forum for the exchange of ideas and a resource for small groups everywhere. How is your small group encouraging and equipping one another? What have you been blessed with that might encourage others? Send us a few paragraphs, and a picture if you have one.

Let us know how THE LOOKOUT can help your group.

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their

homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts. (Acts 2:46).