

Sessions – Big Events – myfishbites.com

So this is a little look at what happens when you get back from Soul Survivor, Spring Harvest or other events. You're fired up, young people are fired up and you have to get back to the skanky old building which is the church property, with all the issues it brings!

To do this we're looking at a passage from Isaiah. I think I look at this in a different context elsewhere on the web site. It's 1 Kings 19.1-18. I felt God speak and sat this passage is relevant because Isaiah had just done mad things for God and then came down from his high, was tired and a little depressed..

So let's look at what happened and what God did and said - it's encouraging!

1. When we went away one of the young people took a camera and made a video of the highlights of the week. This kind of turned into a mini 'do stupid things' type video... unfortunately leading to 2 fairly serious injuries to those taking part, including a broken arm... anyway! You may want to suggest the young people don't do such things...

We edited the movie and showed it the following Sunday.

2. Before you go, get the young people to write down what they are looking forward to, what prayers they want answered, what they want to get out of the event etc. Then when you get back, go through what people wrote. If you want you can put them in a sealed envelope then hand it back to the individual so it's private.

If you don't do this before, get them to write down the encouragements, answers to prayer, what they learned, what they enjoyed, the downside, plus practically what you can learn about going to and from the event etc.

3. If you've taken photos, show them on screen when you get back. One event we were at was featured on Songs of Praise. On watching it I found 3 of our group on it so I captured the footage, magnified it and then showed it at the youth service the following week.

4. Did you learn any new songs at the event or get resources or new songs? Start and end (before and after) with music from the week away. Sing the new worship songs and learn from what was done and bring what you can into your youth ministry. Otherwise get the young people who are musicians to get together and then do the songs. This is what we did.

5. It's really important to think about those who didn't go to the event. Show extra time for them and look out for them, make sure they don't

get or feel left out.

6. It can be hard coming back so get down some ideas to take practical action to effect and affect to make positive change in your church or community... then "just do it" (as Mr Nike would say!)

What Elijah had done

In 1 Kings 17 and 18 we find that Elijah was really being used by God.

In a kind of way he was on a spiritual high, seeing God do some awesome things. This is like these big events where God often does some really big stuff like people getting saved, healed, filled with the Holy Spirit etc. Then there's all the bands playing who are amazing!

For Elijah, he had stopped the rain (as you do!), brought a little boy back to life, killed the prophets of Baal, then saw the Lord pour down fire on wet ground, stones and wood. Elijah had killed the prophets (a symbol today of us putting sin to death in our lives, another thing that happens during big events and festivals). Then heavy rain came down from heaven.

What happened next

Next we see that Elijah gets afraid after he is threatened with death and runs away into the desert. The same prophet that has just had an amazing spiritual high and seen the power of God move supernaturally gets scared, doubts and runs.

Surely that's just like many of us. We have amazing things happen spiritually. This is when we need to be careful then. We need to remember that God is with us in the highs and lows. Like with drugs, we have to recognise there is often a downer after a high. We also need to see that big events and real moves of God can have a cost, they can make us very tired. Elijah was also tired. Very tired. So tired that God sent an Angel to feed Elijah and encourage him to rest.

After some big things we need to thank God, watch out so we don't get tripped up spiritually by the evil one - and get some rest!

God's Solution

As we've just seen, Elijah was tired and doubting. God knew what Elijah needed and God knows what we need. Elijah needed food, drink and sleep to rebuild his strength. Not surprising considering what had just happened! And Elijah had things to do (verse 7-9).

For us, God will know what we need too. This can be different. Sometimes God comforts, sometimes God convicts of sin, sometimes God steps back to build your faith and test you. Where are you today? Be encouraged. God is at work. Everything God does is for a purpose.

He's more interested in your spiritual development than your comfort or desires. But God's best is always the best and always the place to be!

Next God had work for Elijah to do. Encouraging or what. After a downer, God has a purpose. He has a purpose for your life too. A unique, significant and amazing purpose.

For Elijah, God revealed himself to Elijah. He said to Elijah in verse 11, 'go stand by the mountain and I will pass in front of you.' Then there was a strong wind, an earthquake, a fire and then a quiet, gentle sound. Elijah realised the quiet gentle wind was the Spirit of God. What about us? Are we sensitive to the Holy Spirit? Do we know when God is present? Are we prepared to wait through some hard times or some unusual events before we see God? Like Elijah, are we prepared to wait at the edge of the mountain for God?

God then spent time with Elijah, giving him a right perspective and lifting the depressive attitude (verses 14-18). God spoke directly to Elijah (as he does to you and me through his Word, prayer, a feeling, a voice in our head, through a situation, a book, other people etc). God listened to Elijah as he poured out his heart (verse 14). God wants you to talk to him, to pour out your heart. He cares. God hurts when you hurts and is happy when you are! God also answered Elijah in verse 18 and encouraged him.

Verse 18 is really encouraging. How, you ask? Well, God reminded Elijah that despite how he was feeling, there were 7000 other people left in Israel who were on God's side. For us this means that wherever we are, there are many faithful, mad for God people around us.

Even if your church is dull and you feel like you're the only one passionate about God, God is reminding you today that it's not true. There are some amazing brothas and sistas around you, passionate for God, even in your church or area. Maybe you need to ask God to open your spiritual eyes to them, or ask God to bring connect you.

Finally

We learn that we are used by God to bring God's kingdom and message to others. What we have is not just for us but to pass on to others, to invest in others and to see them grow in God, maybe even beyond us. (verses 19-21 and Elisha).

Read verse 21 at the end. What do we see? We see Elisha making sacrifices for God. We see him kill his cattle and leave his family. We see Elisha then submit to Elijah. The Bible says he followed Elijah and became his helper. If you want to grow, you have to start humble, be prepared to learn and set aside your opinions, prove yourself to God and get in the footsteps of a Godly man or woman of God and watch them.

You don't become a spiritual leader, a prophet, a man or woman of God overnight. You can help yourself by learning from others. How is your attitude today?

A prayer

Dear Lord God, I pray that your Word would do a work in people's lives today. I pray that your Spirit would keep what has been said in our hearts and minds. If you've spoken to people, help them make a change. Help us take action for God from this talk.