

FUDGE RIPPLE SUNDAY

From Day 1 Rock Church has been a cross-cultural church of blacks and whites loving and serving each other. This blending of races bucks the system of the world as well as the system of most of our national Christian church life where separation of the races predominates. Racial reconciliation doesn't just happen. A church has to work at it to overcome prejudices, ignorance, and misunderstanding.

Fudge Ripple meetings were started early in Rock Church history as a forum where racial differences and opinions could be aired and mutual learning and understanding could be reached. The format was for Vanillas (whites) and Chocolates (blacks) to meet separately the first half of the morning, discuss the announced topic, and then come together (Fudge Ripple) in the second half to bring both discussion summaries, and then discuss together for mutual understanding. The goal was to be preventive, to "maintain the unity of the Spirit".

Rock Church fell away from doing Fudge Ripple meetings for several years, but recently several members expressed a desire to start them up again. Racial differences are an ongoing reality. Some of these differences can lead to hurtful statements or actions which can then lead to distrust, bitterness, and disunity.

We have chosen the topic of "Interpersonal Relationships" as our emphasis for Fudge Ripple Sunday, February 19, 2017. The format for the chocolate/vanilla meetings will be for attendees to submit written questions or observations, either signed or anonymous. Facilitators will read aloud the comments submitted and discussion will ensue. In the Fudge Ripple half of the morning the facilitators and Pastor Stevenson will bring before everyone the questions and comments most conducive for general discussion.

From their book *Breaking Down Walls*, Pastor Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein wrote 8 principles for racial reconciliation which need to undergird our life as a church.

1. Commitment to Relationship: Racial reconciliation is built upon the foundation of committed relationships. See Ruth 1:16
2. Intentionality: the purposeful, positive, and planned activity that facilitates reconciliation. See Eph. 2:14-15
3. Sincerity: the willingness to be vulnerable, including the self-disclosure of feelings, attitudes, differences and perceptions, with the goal of resolutions and building trust. See John 15:15
4. Sensitivity: the intentional acquisition of knowledge in order to relate empathetically to a person of a different race or culture. See Eph. 4:15-16
5. Interdependence: recognizing our differences but realizing that we each offer something that the other person needs, resulting in equality in the relationship. See 1 Cor. 8:12-14
6. Sacrifice: the willingness to relinquish an established status or position to genuinely adopt a lesser position in order to facilitate a cross-cultural relationship. See Phil. 2:3-4
7. Empowerment: the use of repentance and forgiveness to create complete freedom in a cross-cultural relationship. See 2 Cor. 8:9
8. Call: We are all called to be involved in the ministry of reconciliation, but some are gifted with a special call to be racial reconcilers. See 2 Cor. 5:17-21

We pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten our minds, expose our sins, sensitize us to the needs of our brothers and sisters, and bring us to the Truth.