

## MINISTERING IN YOUR GREEK CHAPTER: IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU!

If you are a campus minister working on the college campus today, I believe working in the Greek system is one of the most strategic places on campus. If you are working with Greeks, here are some thoughts that you can challenge them on at your next Greek bible study or one on one time.

### YOU ARE THE INSIDER

You may have heard the saying, "You may be the only Bible they will ever see." This means we need people living out the gospel in fraternities and sororities. They are an insider; I am an outsider. I can come meet with your officers and speak to your pledges about spiritual things and even start a Bible study but I can never gain quite the respect you can have because you are there with them and living amongst them. In Matthew 9, we read about the calling of Matthew to become one of Jesus' disciples. Verse 10 records that Jesus went to Matthew's house and dined with "sinners". In Matthew 11:19, Jesus says that people say he is a "glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" I believe Jesus' opponents said this about him because he spent time with the lost. He did not just occasionally show up and give a sermon but he ate with the lost and spent time with them.

You need to be the most active person in your chapter. Eat every meal at the house, attend every chapter meeting and go to the parties. Be with your brothers and sisters! Since Jesus was perfect, he would have known how long to stay at the parties. We all know that after a certain time, there can be things that go on that are not at all holy, so it's important to know when to leave. Not too long ago I had a chaplain share an experience he had in his chapter recently that is all too frequent in fraternities. He said that he went to chapter planning on sharing devotion but gave up when the head advisor stood up and said, "I want to hear about your sexual escapades from formal this past weekend!" For the next 30-45 minutes, my friend had to listen to things shared that depict what Paul says in Ephesians 5:12: "For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret." After he finished his descriptions of the chapter meeting, I immediately said to him, "That's why you have to be active in your chapter! They need you to be there to be a light in a dark place!" He is still active in that chapter and I thank God for men like him.

### FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

In the book of Esther, it seemed like the Jews would be destroyed. At that moment, Mordecai sent a note to Queen Esther, who was Jewish.

In Chapter 4:13-17 we read:

13"[Mordecai] sent back this answer: 'Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?' 15Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.' 17So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions."

What if you actually had nothing to do with you being a ΣΧ or ΧΩ? What if God was the one who placed you where you are for such a time as now? If you are a follower of Christ, He is the one who has placed you where you are. You are a ΣΑΕ or a ΔΔΔ for a reason. If you think you got a bid to that chapter because of who you knew, or how you look, or what you wear, you are forgetting that it all was a part of God's greater plan to reach the actives around you who do not know Christ. I have

learned from experience that if you do not step up and become a light in your chapter, God will use someone else. He may raise up someone within your chapter or He may bring someone in from the outside –and they may not even be Greek. In every chapter there are people who He is drawing to Himself and He is calling for faithful men and women to join with Him in drawing men and women to Himself. In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul is charging the church to step up and do the same:

“17Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”

### It is WORTH It!

There are at least two things you are saving people from. First, if you introduce them to Christ, you are saving them from an eternity of being away from God’s presence. Also by introducing them to Christ and calling them to live holy lives, you can spare them a life of pain resulting from the consequences of living an unholy life. When I speak to pledge classes about what it looks like to be a man, I always say, “If you act like Hell and live like Hell, one day you will wonder why your life as turned out to be a living Hell.” Our communities are full of former Greeks who cared little for godly living in college and are now paying a severe price for it with broken marriages and regrets about their past.

### DON’T BE A LONE RANGER

Get involved in a local church and a local campus ministry. If you do not get involved with at least one and hopefully both, you have very little chance of maintaining your light in this dark place. There is a high probability that you will either give in to temptation and blend in with everyone else or become a self-appointed Pharisee, who justifies why you need to leave your chapter for something or someone else. And just a side note: In my 29 years of working in the Greek system, I have only met one couple that met in a bar. My point is that your chances of meeting a godly spouse are far greater if you actually get involved in the local church and or a campus ministry.

### It’s NOT ABOUT You!

*The Purpose Driven Life* has become the second most-translated book in the world, next to the Bible, and has sold more than 30 million copies. The opening sentence in the book says, “It’s not about you!” When you first went through rush and joined a fraternity or sorority, you initially did it because maybe you wanted to meet people or experience Greek life. Those reasons are good, but if you are a follower of Christ, then the older you get, the less you should be looking for how much you can get out of your chapter, and the more you should be looking for how much you can give away of yourself and the

I would guess that only 1 in 100 followers of Christ stay involved in their chapters. One main reason for this is that the older you get the less the chapter has to offer you. But it is not about you! Yes, as an upperclassman you may have a boyfriend or girlfriend, and you now have a set major, and the chapter really seems like it has little to offer you. But your junior year and especially your senior year can be the most fruitful years of your life so far if you hang in there and stay active in your house.

With all the persecutions the early church had to go through, Paul wrote several words of encouragement. In Galatians 6:9 we read, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

You can launch a ministry of evangelism in your chapter that will last for decades. I know because it happened to me. When I graduated I only had around 3-4 faithful guys whom I had poured into but they in turn disciplined a few who disciplined a few. When I was doing research for my book *How to Live on Mission in Your Fraternity or Sorority*, I found out that my discipleship chain in ΣΧ had gone on for over 18 generations! At the end of the apostle Paul's life, he similarly challenges Timothy to pour his life into other men: "And the things you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2. I would challenge you to take the time and read *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman. It is a masterpiece on the subject of pouring your life into others.

## BE HONEST

Over the years, there have been a lot of people who have been burned by pastors or church-goers who portray an image that is not real: an image that makes it look like they have it all together. But we all know that is not real life. When you speak at chapter or lead a devotion or bible study, always be honest about your short comings and failures and you will gain the respect of the actives.

## WHO WILL BE THE MOST RESPECTED PERSON IN YOUR CHAPTER?

If you think about it, at the end of the day, the most respected people in the chapter are NOT the ones who drink the most and hook up the most. The most respected people are the ones who truly live out the life that our rituals call us to live. I was by no means perfect and made a lot of mistakes, but I tried to live out our creeds and standards to my best ability, and it turned out that when men in my chapter were struggling, they would come to me and want my advice. As I mentioned earlier, I lived in the house my senior year and I can remember at least 4 times that brothers came and sat on my couch and opened up and wanted advice on their life. I had the honor of introducing many of them to Christ.

One Monday night I decided share the Gospel at one of my last chapter meetings. I knew I was graduating soon and would move into a mission field somewhere far away from Fayetteville, Arkansas. I stood up and read Matthew 7:21-23, which says: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" I went on to explain that just because they had made sacred vows to our fraternity that did not make them Christians. They had to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. Three weeks later, I was at my last chapter meeting as a Sigma Chi at the Uof A. During the last chapter meeting, they give out an award called the Senior Key Award. It goes to the active that was the most respected senior that year. Usually this would go to the president or someone who had served in several leadership positions, and yet when they called out the name of this person, it was I! You would have thought that after my devotion from three weeks earlier, I would have been last on the list, but this proves that although many of the actives (and maybe even most) did not necessarily agree with what I said, they could not help but agree that I loved my chapter and my brothers. As Winston Churchill once said, "Never give up!"

## FURTHER READING:

Passages that deal with gray areas I may deal with in the house:

Romans 14:14-23; Philippians 4:8; 1 Corinthians 10:23-24

I don't want to be doing anything that could disqualify me from keeping the respect of my brothers: 1 Corinthians 9:22-27.