DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE



TEXT SUMMARY

Our text, <u>Hebrews 13:7-16</u>, continues with various exhortations concerning support for spiritual leaders (7-8), the need for focus in doctrine (9-15), and concern for the well-being of others (v. 16).

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

There are several exhortations in our text. Some are direct commands (v. 7, 9, 16), and some are introduced with "let us..." (v. 13, 15). Find the exhortations.

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

- 1. Verse 8 is another one of those verses that we have seen in isolation so many times that it's difficult to see how it fits into the flow of thought in its context (think Hobby Lobby). What does v. 8 have to do with v. 7 and v. 9?
- 2. The writer urges his readers not to get distracted by debates about food (v. 9-10). He gives three reasons. What are they?

 - Concerning their own well-being ("benefit," v.
 9):

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SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

- 1. The responsibilities of the congregation toward their leaders appear twice in this chapter. In our text, we have v. 7, and again in v. 17 (in next week's text). Although our age is afflicted with deep distrust of people in authority and in the institutions they lead, our fellowship enjoys a healthy relationship between the congregation and our leaders (elders and pastors).
 - Three of the exhortations are in v. 7, all concerning how the congregation is to regard their leaders: What does it mean to "remember your leaders" and "consider their way of life, and imitate their faith"? What internal postures and outward habits would a congregation need to cultivate in order follow these commands?
 - How can a congregation both respect their leaders but also hold them accountable?
- 2. Debates about food are alien to our culture, but they were central in the world of the writer and readers of this letter. In our fellowship, we follow the dictum: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."
 - What are the debates over the negotiables in our day, secondary and tertiary issues in which we must not demand unity but graciously give liberty to disagree?
 - How can we distinguish between "essentials" on which we must agree and "non-essentials," where we must be satisfied with various opinions?