

Words of Introduction and Welcome  
Body & Soul Worship and Adult Sunday school series  
May 8 – June 5, 2011

Today we begin our worship and adult Sunday school series: Body & Soul: Healthy Sexuality and the People of God

A lot of prayer and planning has gone into this...it was not just a whim or a spin of the worship topic wheel. Doing something like this has been talked about since my first full year as pastor. But the timing didn't feel right, so Pastoral Team continued to keep it in mind. When I heard that the materials for this particular series were being worked on, it seemed good to wait and see if it would be a good resource for us. So, after reviewing them last fall, Worship Committee and Pastoral Team decided to create space for a series on sexuality in 2011. And since March, a group has met to talk about how this might look in our congregation as well as help prepare and plan for this time. I am grateful for everyone involved.

And to be clear...

by sexuality we are not just talking about sex.

But sexuality as how we experience and live in our bodies and through our senses as girls and boys, men and women. It is also about our deep desire to be meaningfully connected to one another and to God...in close relationships...but not just sexual relationships.

Today's focus is on our bodies being created and blessed by God. [The following weeks schedule:]

**May 15: Created for Intimacy**

**May 22: Honoring the Gift of Physical Pleasure and Sex**

**May 29: To be determined**

**June 5: Holy Desires: Sexuality and Spirituality**

In following with the end of children's Sunday school, Adult Sunday school will end on May 29<sup>th</sup>, Memorial Day weekend. We chose to continue the worship series into June 5<sup>th</sup>, so that we are not ending this overall time on a holiday weekend. So worship and adult Sunday school will not be focused on the same aspect of sexuality on May 29<sup>th</sup>.

As has been stated in the bulletin, this series will not adequately cover all the brokenness that we experience in relation to our sexuality. Nor is this series a study on homosexuality. Rather it is a time to look at the foundations that affect all of us, our basic human sexuality. This applies to us no matter what our sexual orientation, or marital status, or age.

And in these 5 weeks we will not cover all that could or should be said. There will be things left unsaid and things that could use much more time. Just like the illusion of

parents needing to have that **one** “Sex Talk” with their kids, we as the church will need to have more than one talk about sexuality (even if it is a really great conversation!) Sexuality is so much a part of our lives...and gets talked about in so many ways outside of church...that we need to find ways to keep the conversation going. We will not do this perfectly, but that’s not the point anyway. (don’t know how many times I told myself that this week)

This is not an easy topic to talk about in church. It takes courage for us to do this together. We will face challenges along the way...misperceptions about words said, we may find ourselves defensive, or just plain uncomfortable, and we may not all agree (that shouldn’t be too new for us).

But in wading into this topic of sexuality, we open ourselves more wholly to God and to one another. We grapple with the struggles, perceptions, and beauty of our bodies, desires, and senses. And not just outside of the church walls, but within. We owe this to God, ourselves, and to our children...who hear plenty of sex talk outside of this space.

This is holy ground. God’s presence and grace surround us. We do not do this alone.

~ written by Lorie Hershey  
May 8, 2011

