

Participant Guide

Week 6: Hospitality & Peacemaking

Discussion for week of February 21, 2021

Connecting

Take a few minutes to catch up.

- Describe your week in 2-3 words and briefly explain.
- Share something that God has been teaching you or a way you've been encouraged lately.

A Reminder of Purpose

We're gathered to grow in Christ-likeness, learning to love God and others, together. As we approach some harder topics in this series, remember to arrive ready to listen and learn from others' perspectives, respect safety and confidentiality, value your relationships above proving your point, deal with conflict lovingly, and to all be ready to surrender your ideas to the heart and mind of Christ. We may not always agree, but we will always be respectful.

Prayer

"Holy Spirit, help us to be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. Help us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
(Ephesians 4:2-3)

Scripture & Discussion

Read Luke 19:1-9. Then discuss together:

- "A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector." Have you been in a situation in which the first thing that comes to your mind when you see or think of some person is something derogatory? What are your feelings about it in face of the sermon?
- How knowing that a "political/ideological foe" is also interested in Jesus might change the way you relate to that person?
- What does hospitality look like when two people with conflicting political persuasions are on the same table under the same roof?
- What would motivate a tax collector to welcome gladly a Rabbi? What did he see in Jesus that he didn't in other Jewish religious leaders?
- Part of the exercise of being hospitable is to deal with what people might think of you as you "eat with sinners." What are the challenges here and how to overcome them?
- In which ways a commitment to bring salvation to someone's house can speak louder than the impulse to bring someone to a political/ideological side of the fence (or to altogether defeat him/her)?
- Each week, we're going to brainstorm together how the Scripture can be applied to our relationships as a Life Group. **As a group, what guiding principle can we agree to uphold with each other through the rest of this series (and beyond)?**

SHALOM
following Jesus in an angry,
anxious, and polarized world

Practice: Practicing Hospitality

In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus promotes a true revolution of love when he says: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven." And he adds: "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? If you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others?"

Practicing hospitality with friends or people we have some emotional affinity is easy. However, the kind of hospitality we are being invited to practice is as navigating in uncharted waters. Practicing hospitality in an angry, anxious and polarized world entails being open to and welcome people who we think are in the wrong side of the fence. And this is not possible if we are not committed to "making peace and killing the hostility" (Ephesians 2:14).

- *What would it look like for you to be known for your hospitality, for your willingness to listen to the other, rejecting the impulse of cancelling others from your life?*
- *Because of the current restrictions due to Covid-19, "inviting to a house" or "sitting on the same table" are not always possible or feasible. What are other ways you can practice hospitality and engage in loving conversations with people whom we disagree with on these days?*

Pray and ask God to give you the heart of Jesus so that you would be able to master your bad feelings and emotions and to be open to welcome others and love them as Jesus did.

Caring for One Another

- *What help do you need to overcome anticipated challenges in doing this practice?*
- *Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?*

Based on what you've shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.