

Community Group Guide

@ our core – Genuine Hospitality

The Gathering

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Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

The seventh message in the "@ our core" series dealt with **Genuine Hospitality** and the expectation that open homes will lead to open hearts. Here are 3 things that Paul taught us about hospitality:

1. **Hospitality is important:** Hospitality isn't a new concept to most of us. In fact, southern hospitality is something we are very familiar with. It's when we act kind, but secretly we complain about others. Genuine hospitality is about being kind. Period. It is a command issued for last days living (1 Peter 4:9) and is a requirement for church leadership (1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:8). According to the Bible, hospitality is a big deal.
2. **Hospitality needs a place:** Typically, hospitality takes place somewhere, and in the Bible, that place is usually in homes. The words "homes" and "house" occur 123 times in the Gospels and Acts, and some of the things that took place in homes where healings, the birth of Jesus, deeper teachings by Jesus with His disciples, salvations, communion and worship. Instead of waiting until Sundays to see these things in church, we can see them everyday in our homes.
3. **Hospitality has a price and a payoff:** There is a price that comes with offering hospitality to those around us, because it usually involves trusting Jesus with our homes and the things in them. In Mark 2:1-12 we find a man who allowed his home to be used by Jesus for teaching and healing and didn't stop Him even when strangers dug through his roof. But the result was a healed man and a glorified God. Totally worth it!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Take a few minutes as a group and discuss Southern hospitality (acting kind) and genuine hospitality (being kind). Which is most common? Which is most impacting?
- Pastor Paul mentioned that the home is the most frequent place for hospitality in the Gospels and the early church in Acts. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being it's all good and 10 being I'd freak out), where does opening your home to others rank on your comfort level?
- During the teaching, Pastor Paul shared a long list of things that took place in the Bible when homes were opened to people. Among them were healings (Mark 5:38), salvation (Luke 19:5-6), teaching (Mark 7:17-23), worship (Matthew 26:6-13), meals and communion (Mark 14:16-25). Which of those would you love to see take place in your home? Have you ever seen these take place in your home, or anyone else's home? Talk about that.
- Take a moment to read Mark 2:1-12. This is a great example of the price and the payoff that comes from opening our homes to Jesus for Him to use how He chooses. Put yourself in the owner's place and discuss the different emotions you would have felt as this scene played out in your home.
- Genuine hospitality is something we grow towards is a process, and none of us typically go from closed to open arms overnight. In fact, Romans 12:13 commands us to "practice hospitality." In other words, we can never say we've mastered genuine hospitality and stop growing. Discuss what your next steps are in the area of hospitality both personally and also as a community group.

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.