

JOINING JESUS ON HIS MISSION

SESSION 6: Chapters 14-16

Warm Up: Share one story from your life that has been meaningful or impactful for you.

Dear Friends,

Last session we started working through part 2 of Finke's book by studying the first two missional living practices. This week we will look at the other three practices:

- Talking with people
- Doing good
- Ministering through prayer

As in previous weeks let's begin by considering a few Bible passages:

Caring Enough to Listen, Talk, and Help Others

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.*" ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9.35-38)

³⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. ³⁵ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late." ³⁶ Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." ³⁷ But he answered, "*You give them something to eat.*" (Mark 6.34-37)

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷ And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort." (2 Corinthians 1.3-7)

The Power of Prayer

¹³ Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (James 5.13-16)

Discussion Guide

"It's hard not to like someone once you know their story" – Fred Rogers

1) Discuss the quote above from "Mr. Rogers." How has this worked in your life? How can hearing people's stories help you join Jesus on His mission?

2) The opening sentences in this chapter says, "God can do more with two people talking with each other than he can with two people successfully ignoring each other." Why does this make so much sense? How might this reality

influence our relationships 1) With each other? 2) With family? 3) With neighbors? 4) People with whom we are in regular contact?

3) What makes it so easy to ignore people? Do you think as a society it is easier or harder to have conversations with people? How has having a “conversation” with someone changed over time?

4) Read together the paragraph that begins on the bottom of page 113 and finishes on page 114. How can you identify with what the author writes here? How can we, as Christ followers, change these trends?

5) What advice would you give to the “introverts” as well as the “extroverts” as they engage others as they join Jesus on His mission?

6) Respond to the following quote from page 119: *“What if random acts of kindness aren’t so random? What if the unplanned good we go around doing for people is actually planned out by God? In fact, that’s how it works. Ephesians 2:10 says, ‘For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.’*

7) Intangible to tangible – that’s what doing good is all about! The Kingdom of God is largely invisible, so when we think of the Kingdom becoming tangible or visible it happens through the participation of the people of God. Discuss examples of when the Kingdom of God has become tangible to you.

8) Our ever-present, yet invisible Savior Jesus is with us ... we know Him and trust Him. But how about those who don’t yet know Him? How can our simple acts of daily goodness help people see Jesus in a tangible way?

9) Mother Teresa said: *“Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”* With that in mind consider:

- a. How can we plan to do good things in advance?
- b. How can we serve others in small, unplanned ways?
- c. How can we make the Kingdom more tangible to others?

10) Why is prayer such an important part of joining Jesus on His mission? Have you ever said to someone, “I’ll pray for you” but because you didn’t write it down you forgot? What if when someone asked you to pray for them or you offered to pray for someone, you did it right then and there? Do you think you could do this? Why or why not?

Now let’s conclude by taking another look at the scripture passages from the beginning of this lesson:

What do the passages under the heading: “Caring enough to Listen, Talk and Help Others”, describe as the “right attitudes” to have toward people as you engage them on a daily basis? How do these same attitudes apply to responding to the opportunities God gives us to “do good” toward others?

Read again and discuss the passage from James 5. Now try something that might be a little tough for some of you. In your group take turns praying: both general requests to God and specifically for the person on your right.