

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMER
AT
HILLSIDE

August 27, 2023

BETTER TOGETHER - Kelly Roth

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you *think more deeply* about the sermon and *engage with others* through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and *allow God to work* in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What is your favorite thing to do with a group of your friends?

➤ EXPLORATION

Jesus was an amazing teacher. Everywhere he went, he drew a crowd. People wanted to hear what he had to say and they wanted to see what he would do.

Mark 2:1-5 (From your bible, read aloud)

What captures your attention from these verses?

This must have been quite a scene. Jesus was teaching, people were crowded around to listen and then men began digging through the roof in order to lower their friend down in front of Jesus so that he could be healed.

So, who were these 4 men who brought their friend to Jesus? We don't know their names, and

apparently, their names were not important, but their actions were.

They Acted with Conviction

They were convinced that Jesus was the only hope for their friend and they were willing to do whatever it took to get him to Jesus. Our friends are so important. We need to be with people who believe that Jesus is not just ONE of the options, but that he is the ONLY option.

They Acted with Compassion

It is difficult to have true compassion for someone you don't know. We might have pity or feel badly for a stranger's situation, but it is clear that the man on the mat was someone they knew and loved. They saw his suffering and they suffered with him. We don't know if he had an accident or an illness or if he had been this way all his life. But they knew, because they knew him and they knew his story. They were involved in each other's lives.

Who are the people in your life who would do anything to get you to Jesus?

It has been God's plan from the very beginning that we would be in relationship with him and with other people. We are created for relationships. We were never meant to do life alone.

Genesis 2:18 (From your bible, read aloud)

The bible is full of instructions for how we are to interact with each other. These verses are

sometimes referred to as the “One Another’s” and there are 100 in the New Testament alone.

Read through the following verses and take note of each of these important instructions:

From your bible, read aloud

John 15:12

Galatians 5:13

Ephesians 4:25

Galatians 6:2

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Which of these is the most challenging for you?

Because of technology, we are more accessible than ever before in history, but we are less available for community. God designed us to know one another and to be known. We are literally created to be connected to each other.

When meaningful connection is missing, people often turn to addiction. Substance abuse and overdose deaths have skyrocketed since 2020. According to a 2023 study, nearly 165 million residents of the United States are struggling with addiction.

“The opposite of addiction isn’t sobriety, it’s connection.” ~Johann Hari (Swiss Researcher)

Do you agree with this quote? Why or Why not?

We see a deep connection in the men in this story. These men didn’t just tell their friend about Jesus - they took him to Jesus. We also see a great deal of creativity. When they got to the house where Jesus was teaching, they couldn’t find a way to get their friend in - so they made their own way. Bold move!

They Acted with Creativity

To get their friend in front of Jesus they had to get creative. They had to be strategic and intentional – it took work, it required sacrifice. Go back and read verse 5 again.

Mark 2:5 (From your bible, read aloud)

Physical healing is what they wanted, but it was only a temporary fix. Jesus goes to the heart of the matter. Spiritual healing is the greatest gift - it is eternal. But the story doesn’t stop there.

Mark 2:11-12 (From your bible, read aloud)

He was able to walk out in full view of everyone. Just imagine what that would be like. He was lowered through the roof and he walked out the front door. There was no room for him to get in, but you better believe they made room for him to walk out! They were amazed, astonished, beside themselves, filled with wonder.

When was the last time you were truly astonished by something God did? What was it?

The men in this story believed wholeheartedly that Jesus was the only hope for their friend. They had compassion and sacrificed to get him to Jesus. Even when it looked impossible, they didn’t give up. These are the kind of friends we all need in our lives and the kind of friends God has called us to be for others.

Imagine yourself in the story in Mark 2. Which of the following best describes where you are in your life right now?

Are you on the mat? If so, are your friends pointing you to Jesus?

Are you actively connecting with God’s people? If so, who are you pointing to Jesus?

Are you a casual observer? If so, how will you be intentional about community in the days ahead?

➤ TAKE AWAY

God created us for relationships and meaningful relationships take intentionality and effort.

Take some time to pray for each other, asking God to show you how you can share His love with others this week.