



# NEW HEIGHTS CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

*"Our Heart is People, Our Message is Jesus"*

## **Small Group Discussion Questions**

**Series: Glimpses of the Kingdom**

**Title: "You've Got a Friend in Me"**

### **Icebreaker / Getting Started (10-15 minutes)**

1. What stood out to you most from the sermon—maybe a phrase, story, or idea (like the "You've got a friend in me" reference, the story of the prayer team member throwing the weed in the storm drain, the treadmill analogy for the Holy Spirit, or the old lady saying "pray as if it's your own child who's sick")? Why did it hit you? (Quick shares to connect personally and highlight memorable elements.)
2. The sermon describes parables as glimpses of the kingdom that require "imaginative participation" and "squinting" to see, rather than simple morals or clear illustrations. Have you ever had a Bible story (or even a non-Bible story) that confused or disrupted you at first but later revealed something deeper about God or life? Share briefly. (Encourage short examples to prepare the group for slowing down and engaging imaginatively with the parable.)

### **Digging into the Scripture & Sermon (15-20 minutes)**

3. Read Luke 11:1-13 together as a group. Jesus first gives a model prayer (the shortened Lord's Prayer), then tells the parable of the friend at midnight who boldly asks for bread to meet another's need. How does this shift—from a simple model of prayer to a story about persistent, relational asking—change how we approach prayer? (Reference the sermon's point: Prayer is personal and relational, to a loving "Father" or "friend," not a distant force or formula; it's about bringing real needs with shameless audacity.)
4. In the parable, Jesus uses everyday relationships (friend-to-friend, father-to-child) to reveal God's character—He responds not grudgingly but generously because of relationship and our bold persistence. Why do you think Jesus chose this "annoying midnight knock" as the shocking twist to teach about prayer? Who or what in our world today might represent a "sleeping neighbor" (someone reluctant or inconvenient) we hesitate to approach boldly in prayer?
5. The sermon highlights three key aspects of prayer that help us glimpse the Kingdom:
  - **Personal relationship** (prayer to a loving Father who invites intimacy, not performance; religious people perform, needy people pray; countering depersonalization like treating God as an idea to "respect" or "defend").
  - **Standing in the gap/intercession** (bringing others' real needs boldly to God with shameless audacity/persistence; not casual "eh, hope it works out" prayers, but passionate, as-if-it's-my-own-child intercession; communal, not individualistic).

- **Our greatest need for the Holy Spirit** (God gives good gifts, but supremely the Spirit; we domesticate the Spirit like an unused treadmill; prayer is ultimately about more of God's presence, even if other requests aren't answered as expected). Which of these three feels most convicting or relatable to you right now, and why? Share an example from your life.

### **Personal Application & Reflection (15-20 minutes)**

6. The sermon says the kingdom of God comes into focus when we "squint" through prayer to see a God who loves us, is for us, and draws us into relationship—not angry or distant. Where in your life do you see a tendency to "professionalize" prayer (clean it up, perform, or treat it formulaically) or depersonalize God? What label or assumption (e.g., self-sufficiency in LA culture, fear of unanswered prayers) might be fueling that? How might Jesus be inviting you to "squint" and see Him differently—as a friend who's crazy about you?
7. Jesus is the ultimate answer to our greatest need: He models dependence on the Father, teaches us to pray for the Spirit's presence/power, and promises that God gives good gifts (ultimately Himself). How does remembering that we often pray the "obvious" (e.g., fix my kids' mood swings, lower rent) but need to stick around for the deeper ("Come, Holy Spirit; transform me") change how you view unanswered prayers or your daily dependence? (Tie to Evagrius: God may delay to give something better—communion with Him.)
8. The sermon ends with: God wants to meet needs (ours and others') through our prayers, empowered by the Holy Spirit. "Jesus knows your greatest need is to be more filled with the Holy Spirit... and He knows every other need too." Who is one person or situation in your life this week (yourself, a friend, family, community, or the world) that Jesus might want to love/meet through your prayers? (Think real needs like addiction, loneliness, broken relationships, or daily bread—pray boldly for more of the Spirit in it.)

### **Prayer & Action Steps (10 minutes)**

9. In pairs (as the sermon models vulnerability in community prayer), ask each other: "How can I bless/pray for you this week?" (e.g., a specific need, boldness in intercession, more of the Spirit). Then pray a simple blessing over that person/need.
10. As a closing prayer, invite the group to ask the Holy Spirit: "Lord, what is one way I can pray boldly this week—as intercession for someone else or for more of Your presence in my life?" Share any promptings (e.g., persistent prayer for a friend's need, "Come, Holy Spirit" daily, a text of encouragement, standing in the gap passionately). Commit to following through and checking in next time for accountability and stories of Kingdom glimpses.