

## LIFE GROUP GUIDE: WHY INVITE?

Jan 20-26, 2018

### PREPARE:

Please make sure to review the material in the guide so you are prepared for the conversation in your Life Group. I encourage you to pray and center your heart for what God wants to do in your heart and the hearts of those who gather.

### WELCOME:

Take a few minutes to reconnect with Life Group members. An icebreaker question could be to ask "When it comes to ice cream, is quality or quantity more important? Would you rather have a small bit of high end ice cream or a big bowl of something that is more middle of the road quality?"

### VIDEO:

Watch the video together. Pastor Jonathan will be setting up the discussion on "Why Invite?".

**SCRIPTURE:** Read together. Idea: Have different people read different passages.

#### **Luke 19:1-10 (NIV)**

##### **Zacchaeus the Tax Collector**

19 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

#### **Matthew 8:5-13**

##### **The Faith of the Centurion (NIV)**

5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. 6 "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

7 Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"

8 The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

10 When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.

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### REFLECTION/VISION STATEMENT TIME:

Provide 3-5 minutes for quiet reflection on the passage, so your Life Group members can collect their thoughts and questions. But before you do, say something like:

*“I encourage you to first take a couple minutes to reflect on these passages and what you notice, as well as reflect on your own strengths or growth areas when it comes to extending invitations to either following Jesus or an invitation to church”*

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### QUESTIONS/OBSERVATIONS:

*(Choose ahead of time your favorites. You won't be able to ask all of these.)*

#### Luke 19

##### **Observation:**

Jesus making friends with a tax collector caused outrage from the crowds around him. The expectation was that a Rabbi would hang out with “righteous” or respectable people as opposed to being the guest of a sinner.

##### **Question:**

What does the story of the tax collector show us as followers of Jesus?

##### **Question:**

What is most powerful to you in the story?

#### Matthew 8

##### **Observation:**

Zaccheus and the Centurion were both people who were widely disliked in the Jewish culture, and for good reason. Zaccheus inflated taxes and embezzled the surplus, and the Centurion enforced a foreign occupation of the nation of Israel. It seems that the same people who might present an opportunity for spiritual invitation might also offend us with their actions and lifestyles.

##### **Question:**

How do we stay spiritually engaged and hopeful for our neighbor who offends us?

##### **Question:**

What stands out to you from the story of the Centurion?

##### **Question:**

**Why Invite:** *(some of these could be repetitious, so choose the best ones for your group)*

##### **Question:**

When was the last time you invited someone to church? If so, how did it go? If you haven't invited someone to church before, why is that? What are your biggest hurdles?

##### **Question:**

What is your best strength - and what is your biggest challenge - in talking to someone you love - about spiritual things?

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### **Question:**

Have you ever initiated a conversation about spiritual things with someone? What was that experience like?

### **Question:**

What do you hope to grow in in this next season when it comes to inviting people to church or a relationships with God?

### **Question:**

What are the biggest obstacles to someone coming to church?

### **Question:**

What's the biggest challenge you think that people have in inviting someone to church?

Ideas:

- "I don't have all the answers"
- "It could risk our relationship"
- "They may not like certain things that our church believes"
- "It's not relevant for them"
- "The whole thing would just feel foreign to them"
- "They're just too busy"

### **Question:**

What is uniquely attractive about the church?

**THANK YOU FOR LEADING YOUR COMMUNITY TOWARDS AN OUTREACH FOCUS!**