

PARTICIPANT GUIDE



March
2016



My fellow disciples:

I play squash. For the uninitiated among you, squash is like racquetball with a badminton racquet and a dead ball...in a smaller court. Squash is both a “marker” and a “shaper” of my fitness. After one game, I can tell what kind of shape I am in by how much I bend over and wheeze between each point. Squash is a “marker”...an indicator... of my fitness.

But after a couple weeks of regular play, when I am wheezing less and enjoying it more, I realize that my squash regimen is also a “shaper” of my fitness; by playing it faithfully, it makes me a healthier person.

You would not be reading this LifeGroup guide if you weren’t interested in being a better disciple of Jesus. What if there was something in your spiritual life that could serve as both a “marker” and a “shaper” of your discipleship?

Good news! There is such a thing. Generosity. Jesus, who taught a great deal about money, told his disciples, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” No less than Billy Graham once said, “Give me five minutes with a person’s checkbook, and I’ll tell you where their heart is.”

For part of the season of Lent, we are going to ask a simple question of ourselves: **Am I a generous disciple of Jesus?** If you are, praise the Lord for his work in your heart. If the question makes you feel squirmy, ask the Holy Spirit to make you more like Jesus in this area of your life.

I know we’re not accustomed to talking about money in community. But let me encourage you— while you will likely steer clear of talking about actual numbers, don’t miss the opportunity to talk about the state of your hearts as it regards money. Generosity is a discipleship issue, and we hope your LifeGroup is a place where you are growing as a disciple of Jesus.

The process might make you wheeze a little bit...but in the end, you’ll be in better shape! See you on the other side.

Pastor Mark

Generous Disciples Schedule

[FEB. 26-27]

GENEROUS DISCIPLES

Bible Passages covered: Nehemiah 2

[MAR. 5-6]

GENEROUS DISCIPLES: INTENTIONAL

Bible Passages Covered: Deuteronomy 26: 1-11

[MAR. 12-13]

GENEROUS DISCIPLES: GRATEFUL

Bible Passages Covered: Joshua 24:11-15

[MAR. 26-27]

GENEROUS DISCIPLES: SACRIFICIAL

Bible Passages Covered: Matthew 21

The Purpose of LifeGroups

Our Mission

Working together to present everyone mature in Christ.

At Chapel Hill we believe in striving together as a community towards growth in Christ. As we have explored how to pursue our mission, we've learned that maturity means disciple-making. As we grow more and more like Jesus, we do as he did: make disciples. That was his mission. We want to join in it.

What does disciple-making look like? We believe it needs three important pieces:

- First, disciple-making doesn't happen without an intentional leader. An intentional leader is someone who is strategic and intentional about walking with others in their journey with Christ.
- Secondly, disciple-making happens in relational environments. A relational environment is a place where people feel safe to be themselves, and also accountable to be like Jesus. This most often is a small group.
- Third, disciple-makers need to be equipped with a reproducible process. In other words, they must recognize that people can be in different stages of their spiritual journey, and then be able to point them towards the steps they can take to grow in their journey.

An intentional leader, relational environment, and reproducible process all comes together best in a LifeGroup. Thus, disciple-making happens best in LifeGroups. And ultimately, our mission as a church is fulfilled best in LifeGroups.

So what is the purpose of a LifeGroup? Disciple-making. A LifeGroup that is committed to this purpose is very different from a LifeGroup whose purpose is, for example, studying Scripture or fellowship. Those may be a part of a LifeGroup that is about disciple-making as well, however, the end result of a LifeGroup whose purpose is *not* disciple-making may not necessarily be disciples. So we invite you to consider, what is the purpose of *your* LifeGroup?

If you want to grow as an intentional leader, or learn more about what a disciple-making LifeGroup can look like, consider taking a Multiply seminar. Much of the principles and structure in this guide are expanded on in the seminar. These one day learning experiences could revolutionize your LifeGroup.¹

Contact Carole Hughes at chughes@chapelhillpc.org or, call the church office at 253.851.7779 to sign up for the next seminar.

¹ Chapel Hill is grateful to Real Life Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho, for sharing the principles and materials that are used in this guide.

Relational Environment: Group Rules

Setting some basic group guidelines for how we will honor one another in our group discussions is important. We recommend reading these before your discussion begins each week.

- Ground rules give boundaries for people to operate within.
- They help with the flow and pace of the discussions.
- They help us value one another.
- They help people to be more comfortable sharing deep and meaningful things.

SAFE GROUP: We will strive to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with their struggles and victories.

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

LISTEN: Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

NO "CROSS TALK": Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

NO FIXING: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

NO RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

CONFLICT: We will commit to resolve conflict Biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (there are many others).

- If someone sins against you
(*Matthew 18:15-20*)
- Restoring someone in sin
(*Galatians 6:1-5*)
- Forgive a sinner
(*Colossians 3:12-13*)
- Reconciling differences
(*Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 7:1-5*)

BE SELF-AWARE: Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment through your words, actions and non-verbal communication.

USE "I" STATEMENTS: It's easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our

DURING THE WEEK: Make time daily with God to know Him and His heart through time in his Word, prayer and reflection. Read the chapter after the sermon and before LifeGroup.

GROUP TIME

- Opening prayer
- Vision cast
- Review group guidelines.

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- Nehemiah responds to the call of God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He inspects them and finds that it is time to rebuild the wall for the sake of God's reputation in the world.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

ASK: Was anything added or left out of the story?

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

GENEROSTY SERIES QUESTIONS:

- How is God at work building his Kingdom through Chapel Hill?
- How have you joined in giving to the work of building God's Kingdom through Chapel Hill?
- Look at the Generosity Ladder (see page 15):
 - Where are you? How did you get there?
 - Where would you like to be? How will you get there?

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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GROUP TIME

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REVIEW LAST WEEK'S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK'S CHAPTER:

- God calls for his people to offer him their first fruits: an offering that requires both sacrifice and faith that more fruit will come.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY'S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

ASK: Was anything added or left out of the story?

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

GENEROSITY SERIES QUESTIONS:

- If someone looked at your finances, your calendar, your phone or computer, what would they say are the priorities of your life? Would generosity be among them?
- When you think about your giving to the Lord's work, on a scale of 1-10, how would you define your giving? 1 being "first fruits"; 10 being "leftovers."

NEXT WEEK'S READING:

Joshua 24:11-15

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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REVIEW LAST WEEK’S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK’S CHAPTER:

- God’s people remember that God did the work of bringing them into the promised land. Their response to his love and mercy is to serve him.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY’S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

ASK: Was anything added or left out of the story?

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

GENEROSITY SERIES QUESTIONS:

- Where are you on the generosity ladder? (See page 15) Circle this ring.
- Where would you like to be as a next step on the generosity ladder? Circle this ring.
- What sort of heart change is required for you to move on the generosity ladder?
- What sort of practical steps are required for you to move in this way?

NEXT WEEK’S READING:

Matthew 21

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

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REVIEW LAST WEEK’S STORY AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU HAD TO SHARE IT:

SUMMARIZE THIS WEEK’S CHAPTER:

- Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem provokes two responses: worship and questioning. Those who worship lay down what they have and praise Jesus as king; those who question ask, “Who is this?”

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR IN TODAY’S STORY:

TELL THE STORY:

REBUILD THE STORY THEN READ THE PASSAGE

ASK: Was anything added or left out of the story?

QUESTIONS:

Head questions:

Heart questions:

Hand questions:

CLOSING PRAYER

NAME	PRAYER REQUEST	CELEBRATE/PRAISE

