

WHO WE ARE

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

August 4, 2024
"Who We Are"



OPENING PRAYER

O Gracious God, thank you for calling us into service. Though we know that you have created each one of us with unique gifts for service, sometimes we feel like we do not have the skills or energy to follow through. Help us to see others through your eyes, and give us courage to serve when we see a need. As we gather as a church community, help us to encourage and inspire one another to creative service that would bring your mercy, your justice and your compassion into the world. Help us to do what we can, knowing you will take care of the rest. We pray all of this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Mark 10:35-45 (NIV)

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

³⁶ "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

³⁷ They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

³⁸ "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

³⁹ "We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared."

⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴² Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

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This small group guide was originally used in February 2022 as part of the “Closing the Spiritual Gap” sermon series.

INTRODUCTION

When his disciples were jockeying with one another for power, Jesus tells them that “even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). As Jesus followers, we are to live with a different paradigm, not a life of selfish individualism, but a life of service. The Apostle Paul said, we are to be a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1). God has uniquely designed each one of us to bring about more justice, more mercy, and more loving compassion into the world. Even at times when we may feel overwhelmed or inadequate to the task, if we step out in faith, we find that God uses us. Most often, these are the times when our faith grows, and we discover who God is calling us to be.

QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever said, “yes,” to something that you did not feel quite adequate to do? What was your experience?
2. In our passage, Jesus gives his final and most detailed prediction of his trial, suffering, death, and resurrection. He is about to enter Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11) and confront the temple-based aristocracy. Assuming Jesus will take a position with political power, James and John also want places of authority. How does Jesus respond to their requests?
3. Jesus says, “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.” His teaching required a shocking paradigm shift for the disciples. How do Jesus’ words stand in contrast to our world today?
4. Read Ephesians 2:10. What do you think you were created for? Does it surprise you or comfort you that God has unique work for you to do?
5. We are called to be a “living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1) and make service our “way of life” (Ephesians 2:10). How would our church community change if everyone did one act of service each day? What kind of impact do you think we would have?

FINAL APPLICATION

Call a charity of your choice, or check in with one with whom you have already served. Ask ONE of these questions:

1. What is your greatest area of need right now?
2. How can I best volunteer my time?
3. How can I pray for your team or your volunteers at this time?