

# Community Group Questions Guide

## Ice Breaker (10min):

Help people to loosen up and share. Check in and see how everyone is doing. Ask the group what their Thanksgiving plans are and see if they want to meet the week of Thanksgiving or take a break and start back up in December.

## Opening Prayer (5min):

- **Introduce time of prayer-** After the group welcomes one another, open in prayer. Let your group know what to expect during prayer time, something like: As we start our group time I will open with a word of prayer, there will be a minute or so of silent reflection and then I will read the scripture from Sunday and then close in prayer and we will enter into our discussion time.
  - **Open with a brief word of prayer-** God we thank you for this time together, we open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us, allow us to hear your voice and experience your spirit at work. Come Holy Spirit.
  - **Sit before the Lord in silent prayerful reflection for 1-2 minutes**
  - **Read the scripture listed below aloud for the group to reflect on.**
  - **Close in a word of prayer:** God thank you for your word, come holy spirit and allow us to understand what it means for our lives, lead us in our time of discussion together. In Christ's name, amen.

## Main Scriptures from Sunday:

**Romans 12:21-13:8 (NIV)** *“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.”*

## Read this message overview to the group: (5min)

Hopefully you had a chance to hear the message from Sunday. In it Pastor Tim Coburn talked about “God, Government, Authority and Respect” as a part of our Good News for All People teaching series from Romans.

In this message there were three points taken from the text in Romans 13:

1. Living under authority, established by God. Romans 12:21-13:2, 1 Peter 2:13-17
2. Doing good and maintaining freedom from fear. Romans 13:3-5

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3. The continuing debt to love one another. Romans 13:6-8

### **Work though these discussion questions together (30min):**

- Is there one of these three points that stuck out to you the most from Sunday's message? If so, share which one.
- Did this scripture and message bring up any reactions for you? If so, share with the group as you are comfortable. Do those reactions have a root of mistrust because of past misuse or abuse from people of authority in your life?
- How have you been able to reconcile this portion of scripture with the past 20 months of living, working and relating in Sacramento? What have been the biggest recent challenges for you to apply Rom 13:1-8 to your own life?

**Read to Group-** The biblical precedence for civil disobedience is when the vulnerable are being oppressed by the powerful.

- Have you ever participated in movements of civil disobedience? If so, what were the grounds you saw necessary to step into that space?
- What are issues or concerns, if any, do you see it necessary or justifiable to step into civil disobedience amidst?
- List as a group some distinctives Paul is encouraging the church to live into in Rom 13:7?
- Which ones are easy for you, which ones are more difficult for you? What might be a point of application for you in this list?

### **Group Prayer (10min):**

- Share personal prayer requests and spend some time praying for one another as a group. Ask someone to write down prayer requests and send them out to the group to pray for one another during the week. The hope is to get your group comfortable with sharing personal prayer needs and praying for one another regularly.