

Practice Guide for April 7th 2024

We are Society, pt. 1 — A Living Expression

Suggested Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

In what ways do you practically show your love to friends and family?

Opening (10 minutes)

Before beginning, open the meeting time with 2 minutes of silence to help you focus on interaction with God and one another. At the end, ask someone to open the gathering time with prayer asking for grace to be honest and open with one another.

Question for the group: Have you ever received unexpected help from a stranger or someone you didn't know well?

Reflecting On Scripture (25 minutes)

Have someone read Luke 10:25-37 out loud for the group, then pause for everyone to read the text again on their own.

Questions for discussion:

1. What word or phrase stood out to you during the reading?
2. Why do you think that word or phrase stood out to you?
3. How would you answer the question that the scribe asked: "who is my neighbor?"

Community Practice (15 minutes)

Have someone *slowly* read aloud the following quote.

"Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human." —Henri Nouwen

Take 3-5 minutes to journal your response to these questions:

1. What types or groups of people do I find it difficult to accept as my neighbor?
2. What would be a practical step toward becoming a neighbor for that type or group of people?

Share your answers in groups of two or three.

Group Discussion:

- What types or groups of people do we often see neglected in/by the church?
- What practical steps can our community group do to help our church community be a living expression of our loving God to those who are often neglected?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Have one person close in prayer and/or *slowly* read aloud this prayer from traditional Hebrew liturgy:

Baruch Atah Adonai (Blessed are you, Lord)
Brucha At Shechina (Blessed is your Glory)
Kadosh Baruch Hu (The Holy One, Blessed is He)
We pray for all who are in pain
And all who cause pain.

We pray for those of us
Who are so angry
That we have lost compassion for the suffering
Of anyone who is not a member of our group.
And we pray for those of us
Who cannot see the suffering
behind the loss of that compassion.

May we find relief from our hurts and fears.
And may we not, in our pain,
Lose our empathy
For the hurts and fears of others.
We pray for all who are in pain
And all who cause pain.