

I ♥ MY CITY

Week Three

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for all that we have learned about being a good neighbor and serving you while we serve others. Help us to see ways to implement this practice in our everyday life

Talk it Over

This week we concluded our annual series, "I Heart (*insert your city name here*)". This series is all about being intentional in loving our city and being for our city.

- Can you name something fun you learned during this series that you didn't know about your city prior?
- How are you when it comes to sharing things in life? Is that something that comes naturally? Does it depend on who it is or what it is? Share some of your fun stories around sharing.

Read Series Theme Verse John 1:14 (MSG)

If you are a Jesus follower you are a sent person – we are sent every day into our world, our city, schools, neighborhoods, and places of work. We are not sent to judge, or condemn, or point fingers. We are sent to live and love like Jesus, bringing the shalom of God – the peace of God, prosperity, wholeness, blessings of God, and the kingdom of God into the kingdom of this world.

- How has the idea of being a sent person settled with you during this series?
- Sometimes when something feels big we can feel overwhelmed and respond by shutting down but the truth is, we can find small ways to fill what can seem like a very big role. Can you name one small thing that you could add to your rhythm of life that would bless someone in your life?

We have looked at the B.L.E.S.S. practice throughout this series. This practice is about five simple rhythms that foster friendship and hopefully enable us to share Jesus in the context of a genuine, loving relationship. Let's review the five rhythms now:

B: Being in prayer. Blessing others isn't about forcing our way onto people but rather us aligning our hearts with God and us wanting God's best to prevail in the life of others.

L: Listen. Listening is about genuinely getting to know others.

E: Eat. Eating with others is a spiritual practice that helps foster love, respect, trust, and mutual friendship.

S: Serve them. Serving others comes naturally when you care about them.

S: Story. Once friendship is established we earn the right to share our Jesus story and the Jesus story.

Read John 14:12 (MSG)

This week we looked at the two (S)'s Serve and Share. When we serve people we want to serve them perceptively, personally, and powerfully. When we are perceptive we are taking the time to explore the need instead of deciding we know best. When we serve personally we show empathy and compassion by putting ourselves into someone else's story; we imagine what it would be like to be them. Both of these are important but as Christ followers we also are instructed to serve people powerfully! We have a BIG God who can do BIG things and our prayers bring God's power to the need.

- Do you find yourself being a perceptive person? In what setting do you see this come into play in your life?
- How is it to empathize with the needs of others? Can you think of a time where someone you met struck something familiar in you and you realized you could be them?
- When you pray for the needs of our world do you ask God for big things or does fear tend to get in the way?

Read Romans 10:14-15 and 1 Peter 3:15-16 (NLT)

To bless the people around us we need to take every opportunity to share the Jesus story and our Jesus story. It is natural for us to share things that make us excited or bring good. We have the greatest story ever told in the Bible. It's one great love story from beginning to end and is all about God's love for people – it has tragedy, love, forgiveness, redemption, and hope of a better future. If you are a Christ follower, you also have a personal story and relationship with Jesus. His work in your life is part of your Jesus story.

- Tell about a time you have shared your Jesus story with another person. What was it like? How did the other person respond?
- Do you tend to have expectations when you share your faith or do you notice and look for God?
- Have you noticed what happens when you share your story without expectations but with compassion and love?

This series ends with our big serve weekend taking place. On serve weekend, we are essentially going to close the doors to the church, mobilize thousands of volunteers through service projects, and be the church in our community.

- Has everyone in this group signed up for a project? Is there a project for us to serve together in? To see a list of projects, visit iheartcv.com or your church specific sign-up portal. For questions, email serve@eastlakechurch.com.

If you are getting ready to serve this weekend:

- Share with the group what you are most looking forward to about the weekend and what makes you a little nervous?

If you have already served on I Heart weekend:

- Share with the group what your favorite moments of the weekend were? What did you notice? How did God show up for you and the people you served?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for giving us such a beautiful story to share and thank you for equipping us to serve others in a way that blesses us all. Be with us as we do this now and in the future.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.