



Week Three

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for being here with us. We ask you to open our hearts to what it is you have for us. Help us to engage with you and each other, as you engage with us. Amen.

Talk It Over

This series is all about helping us see the ways in which God invites us to engage in the mission of Jesus. Each of us is invited to join the Jesus mission right where we live, work, and play. This is why EastLake aims to be a place where people are helping people find and follow Jesus.

- Have you ever been *unexpectedly* invited to do something or go somewhere? What did the invite make you feel and think? Tell us about the experience.
- When someone invites you to join them someplace, what do you generally feel that person is saying about you?
- In what ways have you seen EastLake be a place where people are helping people find and follow Jesus?

Everyone is invited to do more than just sit in church. To help us better understand the goal of the church we looked at three different ship analogies. Each example illustrates a possible way we might approach church:

1. We may see church as a cruiseliner or place we visit with an attitude that centers on our wants and needs being met. (*The opposite of this doesn't mean we blindly dive into any church community of course. We each should be wise and aware of a church we choose to invest in.*)
2. We may see church as a battleship. This is about church being a place that looks to aggressively and boldly fight against culture. From this approach we often become most known for what we are against — not what we are for.
3. We might see church as an aircraft carrier. On an aircraft carrier the focus is ensuring planes are cared for so they are equipped to do what they are called to do. This illustration is the one EastLake looks to align with. EastLake looks to be a place where people are better prepared to live and love like Jesus so that they can live the Jesus mission where they live, work, and play.

- Have you ever believed the church should function more like a cruiseliner or a battleship? If so, tell us how that viewpoint came to be and how you shifted away from it?
- In what ways do you feel engaged in the church this season?
- Tell us how you first became engaged in the mission of the church.

Read Acts 20:35 (Voice)

The church is made for people and the people are made for a mission. At EastLake we live out our mission by following some core values. Last week we covered two core values — we reject religion and we encounter Jesus. This week we look at two different values: We play our part and we grow in generosity.

- What does it mean to you to be made for a mission.
- Tell us how you have observed the goodness that comes from giving freely of your time, resources, talent, and so on.
- What is the hardest part of committing to serve or give?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-18 (Voice)

It is the gospel (or the good news of Jesus) that looks to be our motivation for service and generosity. As we become more aware of God's great love, kindness, compassion, and generosity towards us, the idea is we become more inclined to extend service and generosity to others.

- Service and generosity are not intended to be motivated by guilt or fear. In what ways have you ever struggled with fear or guilt being your motivation for service and generosity?
- In what ways have you seen God's great love, kindness, compassion, and generosity for you manifest itself in a desire to serve and be generous towards others?

Read 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)

We play our part (individually and collectively) by serving both where we're gifted and needed. The idea here is God blessed us not just for our sake, but for the sake of others. Moreover, when we serve others with our gifts or where we can, we are sharing God's grace in all the various forms.

- Tell us about a time you felt God's grace show itself through someone else serving you.
- Tell us about a time you served simply because there was a need you knew you could fill.
- In what ways do you feel you are serving others well this season? In what ways do you feel led to get better at serving others or living generously.

Read Colossians 3:23 (ESV)

Our motivation is not guilt or greed (or what we will gain), but our growing understanding of God's grace. It's seeing how much we have been given and how God has blessed us.

- As a group, take a few minutes listing out loud the ways in which you see God's grace in your life this season.
- As a group, take a few minutes sharing areas of life you desire to see more of God's grace prevail.

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for your love. Help us to encounter your grace more and more, and not just for our sake, but so that we can turn around and give and serve more freely to others. Amen.

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 pressured 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.