



Week One

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for meeting us here. Help us to use this time to grow in our connection with you and one another. Amen.

Talk It Over

This weekend we started a new series that centers on reminding us that Jesus followers are called to live as sent people who serve others. During this series, we are focusing our attention on what it means to love our community well through service.

- How long have you lived in your city? What brought you here?
- What do you love about your city?
- What are some of the ways you see your community struggling? What are the hurts? The felt needs?

There are various ways a church can view and interact with their city. Below are four common and specific ways churches posture themselves in relation to their city.

Read Revelations 3:14-16 (NIV)

One — Some churches are in their city. These churches have a level of apathy towards their city. They aren't making an impact. They are indifferent because, in large part, their focus is on who is in their church and not who is outside their church.

- Do you have any experience with a church like this? If so, tell us about it.
- What do you think causes a church to grow apathetic for its city?
- What are some of the dangers of a church functioning in this way?

Read Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

Two — Some churches are against their city. They live with a worldview of us versus them and hold a level of animosity towards those outside their church.

- Have you ever experienced a church that was against its city? If so, tell us about your experience.
- What are some dangers that might come with a church functioning against its city?

Read Romans 12:2 (NIV) and 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)

Three — Some churches are of their city. At first glance, this church is in a good place. They feel relevant and engaged with their city. The problem is they engage in culture so much that they become like culture or try to imitate culture. They have in large part removed the tension between God's truth and cultural norms.

- We live in the tension between grace and truth by being people who love. In what ways have you recently found yourself needing to stand in the tension of grace and truth with love?
- In your own life, have you ever assimilated into the culture or with the people around you too much? What led you there? What helped you see the problem?

(Content continued on the next page.)

Read 2 Peter 2:1-5 (ESV), 1 Corinthians 12:5-6 (NIV), and 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 (NIV)

Four — A church **for** the city. These churches are known for what they are for, more than what they are against. A church like this looks to bless and care for the city in which it finds itself. In a church for their city, the people who make up the church understand they are called, gifted, and needed to serve.

- Key to being a church for our city is being a community of individuals who understands no matter where we find ourselves, our greatest commitment is to reflect Jesus through love and service. In what ways have you seen this modeled?

Read Genesis 12:2-3 (NIV) and Jeremiah 29:7 (NIV)

From the early history of God's people, it's been understood that God's master plan is to bless his people so that others will be blessed through them. To be a person about God's agenda is to be a person who looks to serve as a conduit of God's blessing and kingdom.

- Tell us about a time you saw someone who is blessed, bless others.
- In your own life, have you seen ways you have been blessed and in turn become a blessing to others? If so, tell us about the blessings and the ways they have moved through you.

As we continue through this series, there are four ways we are each being challenged and encouraged to pray on our own.

One — Pray for your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers.

Read Romans 10:14-15

- Who are specific people from these categories you want to pray for?
- What made you pick them?

Two — Pray for other churches in our city.

Read Colossians 1:9-12

- What are some of the other churches from our community? Think of churches you drive by, churches your friends go to, churches you have heard about, and so on.

Three — Pray for the leadership and authorities of this city.

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4

- Who are some of the leaders in our city that you are aware of? What are some of the things they lead?

Four — Ask God to bless our city.

Read Proverbs 11:10-11

- What are some specific ways you want our city to be blessed?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for my city. Help me to be more aware of the people who make up my community and the ways in which they are hurting and the ways in which I can help them. I want to be of service for others. Also, please help my church grow in its capacity to be a church for our city. Help us to be a group of people who love and serve our city well. Amen.

Group Logistics [A Reminder for New Groups]

Are there any details or questions we need to cover for next week? Are we meeting at the same time and place? Who is owning snacks? Are there childcare questions to cover?

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.