

Connecting Group Study Guide

Knowing, Growing, Going

Week of May 8-14, 2016

Follow-up

1. Start by sharing with each other about your previous week.
2. How was your attitude and approach toward your work different last week?
3. Discuss any tangible difference you may have experienced.

Knowing God

Read Acts 11:19-30.

This week we had the privilege of hearing from a leader in God's global "body of Christ." In the least, this is a great reminder to us here in Lancaster County, PA that God is concerned with the entire global community and he is at work all over the world. In our passage (Acts 11:19-30) we start to see how God's community began to become a truly global and cross-cultural community in its early days.

1. Compare verses 19 and 20. What is a significant difference between these two verses?
2. What evidence do we see in this passage that the Father's desire is for all the world to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ (v.21, 23)?

Growing in Christ-likeness

In the four Gospel accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus, we regularly encounter moments when Jesus interacts with and embraces "the other". Jesus eats with sinners, welcomes women and children, gives time to foreigners, just to name a few. Nearly all who encountered Jesus were changed in some way for the better.

1. When the church in Jerusalem heard about Gentiles (Non-Jews) coming to faith in Jesus they sent Barnabas to investigate the happenings. According to v.23, what do we learn of Barnabas' approach to the Gentiles? Do you think Barnabas is Christ-like in his approach?
2. Remember back to the early days of your faith, who was someone that was a Christ-like encourager for you? Share about how they encouraged you in the faith.
3. Look at Acts 11:24. What was the result of God's work through Barnabas in Antioch?

Going to Our Neighbors and the World

1. Our church family was encouraged and challenged in the faith this week by Pastor Ivan Pierre of Haiti. How can you, like Jesus, Barnabas and Pastor Ivan, encourage someone in the faith this week?
2. As we are reminded of the Lord's desire that all the world come to know him through Jesus Christ, how can you encourage the global church? What steps can you take to become a more "globally minded Christian"?

Action Step: (1) Pick someone you know locally—do something tangible this week to encourage them in the faith. (2) Discuss as a group a way that your group can be an encouragement to the globally church family. Design a plan and implement the plan. (For ideas check out this website: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/article/45-ways-encourage-global-mission>).

Close in prayer together—ask God to open your eyes to begin to see his truth deposited within the surrounding culture.