

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

God and the Nations
“Trending” Series
May 6/7, 2017

Main Idea:

God wants us to show compassion to anybody who is in need.

Rooted Experience: *Our desire for Life Groups is to continue the rhythms of Rooted that you experienced (prayer, serving, sharing your story) when you first went through Rooted. This week Rooted is focused on “how God speaks to us,” and we’d like our Life Groups to incorporate a prayer experience into their gatherings, similar to those of the Rooted groups. As your group experienced through Rooted, prayer is God’s primary way to communicate with us. One of the key pillars of Life Groups at Friends Church is the setting aside of time in order to pray corporately and individually. In the next two weeks, we encourage your group to set aside a large amount of time to pray. This may be outside of your group time or included in it. If you do decide to make it a part of your normal group time, we encourage you to set aside formal study or discussion to commune with God together as a group, and individually. Throughout the year, there will also be times when our congregation will gather together for prayer and worship. These times will be a great way to gather your group for prayer. Please make an effort to have a prayer experience! This is an opportunity to pause, re-focus, and seek God together.*

Discovery Questions

1. When was a time in your life when you were showed compassion that you didn’t deserve?

As we conclude our series “Trending,” we’re talking about the topic of “God and the Nations”—the love that God has for the nations. This topic has obvious implications for the hot-button political issue of immigration and refugees, and the response we should have as Christians towards those from other nations who live in our country. For our study time, we’ll turn to a familiar passage in Scripture that talks about the responsibility we have towards those who are in need, no matter who they are or where they come from.

2. Read Luke 10:25-37. From this passage, answer the following questions:

- a. The parable Jesus tells is in response to a question about who a person’s “neighbor” is. From this parable, what do we learn about who our “neighbor” is?
- b. What do we learn from this parable about the responsibility we have when we meet someone in need?

- 3 a. What are some of the views held today about our nation’s relationship with immigrants and refugees?
- b. Is there someone you’ve seen who’s a great example of how to live out compassion in these dividing times? What are they doing that makes them so effective?

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

4. It's clear from the passage about the Good Samaritan that we're called to care about those who have been treated unfairly.

- a. Who has God put in your life who may stretch your own personal definition of "neighbor"? What might you do this week to show them compassion?**
- b. What might get in the way of showing compassion to that person? How could you fight against that?**
- c. How might you grow, generally, in the area of being compassionate towards those who are in need? What are things you've seen other people do to become more compassionate?**

5. Because of the multiple layers that are a part of this conversation, spend time praying together as a group. Ask God for unity and for Him to work His compassion into each of our hearts. Pray also for those in need, both in our own country and around the world.

Leader Guide Starts on Next Page

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Leader Guide

1. When was a time in your life when you were showed compassion that you didn't deserve?

This is a "lighter" question designed to get the conversation going. Spend about 5-7 minutes on this question.

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- a. The parable Jesus tells is in response to a question about who a person's "neighbor" is. From this parable, what do we learn about who our "neighbor" is?
- b. What do we learn from this parable about the responsibility we have when we meet someone in need?

The "Parable of the Good Samaritan" is one of the most famous stories Jesus ever told. In it, we're presented with a few "religious" people who fail to help a stranger who's in obvious need. The only one who does help is a Samaritan—a group of people that the "religious" people of the day hated. Jesus' point in this parable is that the Samaritan was the one who proved to be a "neighbor" to the one in need—and we should do likewise; we need to show mercy to those who are in need (Luke 10:37).

Thus we see from this passage that the definition of "neighbor" seems to extend beyond those who are immediately around us. The Pharisees asked Jesus this very question so that they could know exactly what was expected of them and what was not. This showed their hearts' motive to only do enough to appease the expectations they believed God had of them. But Jesus blew up this notion, showing us God's true heart: universal compassion. And so "neighbor" is anyone who is in need around you that you can help with what you have at your disposal or means.

For part "b" we learn that God wants us to show compassion for others in need, period. As God loves the whole world, so should we, regardless of race, ethnicity or country of origin.

Spend 10-12 minutes on this question.

- 3 a. What are some of the views held today about our nation's relationship with immigrants and refugees?
- b. Is there someone you've seen who's a great example of how to live out compassion in these dividing times? What are they doing that makes them so effective?

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

It may be good at the start of this question to clarify that the ultimate goal of this discussion is to lead us towards compassion and unity.

Part “a” could go down very deep and very divisive rabbit trails. Note, however, that this question is intended to focus on what we see in the world around us, and not necessarily our personal beliefs.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question.

4. It’s clear from the passage about the Good Samaritan that we’re called to care about those who have been treated unfairly.

- a. Who has God put in your life who may stretch your own personal definition of “neighbor”? What might you do this week to show them compassion?**
- b. What might get in the way of showing compassion to that person? How could you fight against that?**
- c. How might you grow, generally, in the area of being compassionate towards those who are in need? What are things you’ve seen other people do to become more compassionate?**

For each of these questions, there will be plenty of room to explore ways to get involved in caring for people. But ultimately we want to show that our actions should be compassionate towards all, especially those who are in our proximity.

Spend 15 minutes on this question.

5. Because of the multiple layers that are a part of this conversation, spend time praying together as a group. Ask God for unity and for Him to work His compassion into each of our hearts. Pray also for those in need, both in our own country and around the world.

This topic is very tough, and can cause tension even among believers. We know that God calls us to compassion, but He does not necessarily call us to recklessness or abandoning personal or corporate responsibilities. Spend a good amount of time praying for unity, compassion and care for all of our “neighbors” on this earth.

Spend 10 minutes on this question.