

LIFE
TOGETHER
DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Gospel and Rights

1 Corinthians 9:1-23, 10:23-33

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Share plans for future Community Group gatherings and the following happening in the life of the church:

- **Men's Summit | Friday, November 3rd 6:30a** @ the church building. Gentlemen, join the men of New City coffee & donuts, a short talk, a story of faith, discussion, and prayer. No preparation required.
- **MEMBERS' MEETING Monday, November 6th @ 7p** | We'll be holding officer elections, talking about the ministry year, and spending time in worship and prayer.
- **PEANUT BUTTER DRIVE for City Gospel Mission** | City Gospel Mission has asked New City to provide 275 15oz jars of peanut butter for their annual Thanksgiving Food Exchange again this year. If you're willing and able to help with the drive, you can drop off your jars of peanut butter in the Commons or on the Kersey's front porch (4413 Floral Ave). The deadline to bring the peanut butter in is Sunday, November 12th.

Again this week, talk briefly about your group's format and schedule for the semester.

We believe that people experience and grow in their faith when they spend time reflecting on God's Word, and also hearing from other Christians. That's what we're hoping for tonight.

OPENING PRAYER

Open your group in prayer. Pray extemporaneously, or use this prayer:

Father, we thank you for the chance to be together tonight. As we talk and reflect on the Scriptures, may we take these things to heart. Help us to bring our lives more and more under the direction and care of your Word. Bear with us when we fail. Help us to help each other. Amen.

OPENER

Especially in these early weeks, taking time to introduce yourselves and getting to know each other is important. Open by asking folks to **introduce themselves**: *name, and other interesting tidbit if you'd like (i.e. hometown, where you live in Cincinnati, what you do during the day).*

Then ask, *If you had to drink one hot drink and one hot drink only for the REST OF YOUR LIFE, what would it be (can't be a pumpkin spiced latte)?*

STUDY/DISCUSSION

Our series this fall is called "Life Together." We are working our way through the first 10 chapters of 1 Corinthians.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 9.1-23, 10.23-33

2. In this chapter, Paul makes a switch from talking about eating food sacrificed to idols, to his right for financial support from the Corinthians. At first glance, these two things seem really unrelated. But Paul is trying to show that the principle he lays down applies to all sorts of areas. What is that principle?
3. Look at verses 15 - 23: What is Paul's biggest concern when it comes to the way he behaves on any issue? What is he most concerned about not getting in the way of?
4. Paul gives us the example of voluntarily laying down his rights for the sake of the gospel. Are there any rights that you have, that may be a stumbling block or that get in the way of the gospel?
5. Are there things that you might willingly sacrifice for the sake of more personally participating in God's mission to renew all things? Time? Money? Leisure?
6. How does this radically contrast with our American ideals and culture?
7. Read Philippians 2:1-11: How does the Lord Jesus' example serve as a pattern for our lives? How does the truth that he did this FOR YOU and FOR US empower us to live this way?

8. What would change in your life if you knew more deeply that God in Christ made himself nothing FOR YOU? How would life, work, and your relationships look different? How does this change how you might engage with your actual neighbors and neighborhood?

9. If desired, **read the Companion Handout together**. What stands to you as significant or helpful?

PRAYER:

Spend some time together in prayer. In the early weeks, this can be a challenge for a group just getting to know one another. You may elect to just lead the group in a closing prayer, pray together as a large group, or break into smaller groups to pray. You can share requests, or simply pray about the things you discussed tonight.

COMPANION HANDOUT

“My dear friend, abandon yourself, and you will find Jesus. Give up your will and every title to yourself, and you will always come out ahead, for greater grace will be yours the moment you turn yourself over to Jesus once and for all” (Thomas A’Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*)

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

“In the life of a community, several decisive questions will need to be confronted again and again: How are we called? To what are we called? Will we follow the call? Only a few are called to the special way that is ours. Yet those who are called - a small, battle-trying band, who must sacrifice themselves again and again - will hold firmly to the common task shown them by God. They will be ready to sacrifice life itself for the sake of unity.” (Eberhard Arnold, *Why We Live in Community*)

“The Rule for all of us is perfectly simple. Do not waste time bothering about whether you ‘love’ your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him.” (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

“The Christian life is not an orgy of self-gratification but a disciplined life focused on things that really matter ultimately... Perhaps the most striking element of this chapter for American Christians is its studied indifference to the “rights” of the individual. Without ever denying that he could claim various rights, Paul exemplifies instead a freedom that relinquishes rights for the sake of others. True Christian freedom is exercised in service... to put it bluntly, 1 Corinthians 9 suggests that if we find ourselves campaigning on the party platform of defending our own rights and privileges, we have lost sight of the gospel.” (Richard Hays)