

Home Groups | Week of March 6, 2016
Sermon on the Mount | Matthew 7:1-14

Ice Breaker Question:

What was the best gift your parents ever gave you?

Read and discuss Matthew 7:1-14:

1. Have you ever been judged wrongly by someone else? How can that experience help you in your relationships?
2. John Stott says the church should be a place where people are supported and encouraged, but is sometimes a place where people feel judged and manipulated. Have you seen the church encourage or support? Have you seen the church judge? How can a church community encourage or support in a healthy way?
3. Jesus says he will answer those who ask, seek, and knock (verses 7-8). He assures us that a Father gives good gifts to his children (verses 9-11). How does this encourage you in your prayer life as you ask God for what you need?
4. Jesus says everyone who asks receives. So how is it that some of our prayers aren't answered the way we want? How do your answers to this question inform your prayer life?
5. Jesus says to enter through the narrow gate, on the narrow road (verses 13-14). What about the broad road is tempting to you? What about the narrow road is challenging to you? Finally, what encourages you to stay on the narrow road?
6. Matthew 7 gives God his due – God answers when we ask, seek, or knock. Matthew 7 also challenges us to do our part – to seek and knock, take the log out of our own eyes, and to enter by the narrow gate. What part should you play in your own faith development? What part does God play in your faith development?

Prayer:

Keep the following prayer requests from our church family in mind as you close:

- > Prayers of healing for Pete Francois, Harry Milli, Hadley Lehr, and Liz Qua.
- > Prayers of comfort for the Wenning family in the death of Judy's mother and the Conner family in the death of Doug's father.

Home Groups | Week of March 6, 2016
Sermon on the Mount | Matthew 7:1-14 | Leader's Notes

Reminders for your group:

- > Lenten Worship Services | Wednesdays through March 23 | 7 am | Sanctuary
- > Service Project Idea: Groups are needed to set up a station for ZPC's Passion Walk on Sunday, March 20 after the 10:30 service. [Betsy Howden; betsyh@zpc.org; 317.873.8137x1010]
- > Join the ZPC Choir for Easter services. Rehearsal Mondays | 8 pm | Worship Arts Room. [Don Nieman; donn@zpc.org; 317.873.8137x1009]

[Leader's Notes]

This passage in Matthew 7 is part of the whole Sermon on the Mount. In the sermon, Jesus is teaching about a new community, where the kingdom of God can be on earth as it is in heaven. When we trust God, seek him first, don't worry, love our neighbors as ourselves, not judging them, then life here begins to look like God's kingdom. May we keep moving closer to God's call on his kingdom coming to earth.

[Question 1] We are called not to judge others. When we have been judged wrongly, and know how that feels, it may be an encouragement to not judge others.

[Question 2] You might carefully take answers or share where a church has been judgmental and then share where a church family has been supportive. As a leader, be careful not to allow this discussion to devolve into being gossip or being judgmental itself. Try to share how a healthy church should support each other.

[Question 3] Followers of Jesus should be encouraged to pray openly and passionately for God to hear their prayers. God wants to answer our prayers in alignment with God's will so that his will is done.

[Question 4] When prayers aren't answered the way we want, it is very difficult to understand. Especially if you see someone around you receiving some healing, and your loved one doesn't receive the desired healing. God's plan is bigger than our plans, and we can trust that God hears our prayers and might answer yes, no, or wait – or maybe even a yes that is different from the answer we are looking for.

[Question 5] The broad road might simply be the tempting things of life or looking at trying to find our own way to heaven or a good life. But the way to salvation is through Christ alone, by God's grace alone, through faith alone – a narrow gate on a narrow road – but it is the best road!

[Question 6] God saves us and provides what we need in life – see Matthew 6. So we are called to ask, seek and knock. To seek first his kingdom, and to do our part in not judging, and in following his path to faith in Christ. Through faith, we live in a way that honors God, to love God first, and to love neighbor as ourselves – in the ways that Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount.