

Ice Breaker Question:

Did you do an audit of your time last week or give something up (social media, TV, etc.)? How did that go?

Read and discuss this week's scripture: Mark 12:28-31, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

1. When you've had someone knock on your door to share their faith with you, what was it like? How can reaching out to your neighbors be similar or different from that experience?
2. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2:3, his appeal to the people there does not come from impure motives or tricking them. What are our motives to reach our neighbors? How can they be impure or pure?
3. In 1 Thessalonians 2:4-7, Paul shares what someone entrusted with the gospel looks like. What stands out to you in Paul's description? Which of those characteristics do you have and which ones do you need to grow?
4. In the book, *The Art of Neighboring*, the authors share on page 102, "We don't love our neighbors to convert them, we love them because we are converted." Discuss the tension in this statement. Do you agree or disagree with the statement?
5. Paul shares that he wanted not only to share the gospel with people in Thessalonica, but also to share his life as well, because the people were dear to him (1 Thessalonians 2:8). Who is dear to you in your life? How can neighbors or others be dear to us – so that we can share our lives and the gospel?
6. Instead of sharing your story first, have you ever asked others about their story first? How does listening create a safe place for sharing?
7. Some of our neighbors will be Christian believers, some will not. In what ways can we be involved in a non-believer's life? As Christians, how are we to engage differently with non-believers?

Prayer:

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

- > Prayers of healing for Eric Groen, John Lindenschmidt, Pierce Robb, Hadley Lehr, Talbott Sumners, and Chuck Vogt.

Reminders for your group:

- > Habitat Faith Build | ZPC Week | May 10-14
- > Sign up to volunteer for VBS 2016 | Cave Quest | zpc.org

Homework:

When people are in relationship with others, they naturally share what they love. In the next week attempt to have a 10 minute conversation with a neighbor.

Leaders notes:

Why do we do what we do? Do our actions match up with our purpose and values? Our motives matter. Our motives matter in applying our faith to life and in thinking about our neighbors. This week, we'll discuss how our motives and our neighbors align.

[Question 1] Most of us would say that when someone knocks on our door to share their faith with us, it feels awkward, or even intrusive. What are their motives in sharing? We can be different if we have the motive of truly caring for our neighbors while we share our faith.

[Question 2] Impure motives might be to get recognition for good works, to check a box, or to count a number when you get a conversion. Pure motives might be to share Christ's love with others. When our motives are pure and heartfelt, the outcome should be authentic.

[Question 3] You might re-read 1 Thessalonians 2:4-7 as you answer this question. Some answers could be: approved by God, entrusted with the gospel, not trying to please men but God, being gentle, and like a mother caring for her child.

[Question 4] A case could be made that God calls us to make conversions (or disciples) in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and elsewhere. A case could be made that we love our neighbors (or anyone) for who they are and where they are. A case could be made that we always are called to love our neighbors (Mark 12:28-31) and pray and work to share the good news of Christ with them.

[Question 5] We should do our best to love our neighbors and share life with them, as well as share the gospel. By praying for them, by taking steps to move from stranger to acquaintance to friend, we can care for them and then share our lives with them. By caring through our actions and our prayers, our neighbors begin to be dear to us.

[Question 6] Kairos prison ministry has a saying: "Listen, listen, love, love." We are called to listen - to others' stories and ask good questions to hear their stories. Most people like to talk about themselves. Hearing their stories will most likely allow us to tell our stories, and God is part of our stories.

[Question 7] It may be easier for us to relate to Christian neighbors – to pray for each other – share praises or struggles. Non-believers may not share the same language and thoughts as us – but certainly share things they are excited about and struggles like we do. We can engage with non-believers by caring for them, listening to their stories, providing for their needs if we can, and gently sharing our lives and our faith as we are able to do so.