



Life Group Studies

Introduction

Over the next four weeks we'll be looking at the theme of generosity through a series of passages from Luke's gospel. The aim is to develop a holistic approach to being generous people who are willing to give of ourselves to God and to others in all areas of our lives. We'll be looking at the ideas of **generous service, generous hospitality, generous relationships, and generous giving.**

1. Generous Service (Luke 9:57-10:20)

Jesus calls us to follow him and this call to discipleship involves wholehearted service. There is a plentiful harvest of people willing to respond to Jesus and so we are to pray for lots of willing workers to serve Jesus and to hear that call for our own lives where we can serve Jesus too. Not everyone will respond positively to the good news of Jesus that we share but there will be people of peace who will receive this message and respond to it. God will do wonderful things through us who are willing to give our lives generously to serving him.

2. Generous Hospitality (Luke 14:1-14)

Hospitality is about opening our lives and our homes to welcome in those who we don't know so well and to generously include them. Jesus challenges us to look out for those who cannot repay our hospitality but reminds us that God sees what we do and he will repay us at the resurrection.

3. Generous Relationships (Luke 17:1-10)

In relationships people will regularly do wrong by us and as followers of Jesus this is an opportunity to show generosity to them in how we respond. Jesus challenges us to be people who forgive others, even if they have wronged us repeatedly. This is such a challenge but Jesus shows us the power that faith in him has to enable us to do this.

4. Generous Giving (Luke 21:1-4)

Jesus calls us to be generous with the material things that we have. He highlights the generosity of a widow who gives what she has to serve God. Even though the total amount is not high it is a high proportion of what she has and so is more generous than people who give more money but who are very wealthy. God calls us to be generous with what we have.

Study One: Generous Service - Luke 9:57-10:20

1. Who are a few of the most generous people that you know? What motivates their generosity?
2. What kind of situations or inspirations make you more inclined to be generous?
3. In Luke 9:57-62, Jesus talks with three people about the cost of wholehearted discipleship. What do they say and how does Jesus respond?
4. What kind of commitments or concerns might prevent you from wholeheartedly serving Jesus?
5. Do you view God as being generous to you? Why/why not?
6. What is the 'harvest' that Jesus is talking about in chapter 10:2? What does it mean when he says that 'the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few'?
7. Why do the 'seventy-two' go out without taking many provisions with them? (10:4-8)
8. The 'person of peace' (v6) is a common experience of missionaries and other evangelists — i.e. someone who is particularly open to hearing about Jesus and to welcome his disciples into their lives. Is there someone like this in your social or family circles?
9. Why were the disciples told to wipe the dust off their feet and not stay in towns they were not welcome?
10. What is the basis for the seventy-two disciples to rejoice? (10:17-20)
11. Can you think of a way in which you could be more 'generous' with your life in the area of serving the kingdom of God?

Study 2: Generous Hospitality – Luke 14:1-14

1. How often do you have people over for a meal at your home?
2. Who would you describe as a particularly 'hospitable' person that you know?
3. What is 'hospitality'?
4. Why were the Pharisees so keen to see how Jesus would respond to the sick man at the house (vv1-4)? What was Jesus' attitude when faced with the needs of others in front of him, and how did that contrast with the Pharisees?
5. What is the relationship between hospitality and compassion? (v5)
6. Why might we be tempted to view hospitality as an opportunity to be 'honored' by others (v7-11)?
7. Why does Jesus say not to invite friends, family or rich neighbours (v12-14)? Is this an absolute command?
8. Who might the 'poor, crippled, lame and blind' be in your social circles, or in our community?
9. What are the rewards for showing hospitality to those who cannot repay us (v14)?
10. Would you like to make a conscious intention to show hospitality in a particular way in the near future?
11. Could your Life Group show hospitality to others in a particular way?

Study 3: Generous Relationships — Luke 17:1-10

1. What is 'forgiveness'?
2. Can you think of examples where people have been 'caused to stumble' in their faith by the actions of other Christians? What is Jesus's response to that? (vv1-3)
3. What is the pattern of forgiveness that Jesus describes in vv3-4? Read Matthew 18:15-17. What additional issues of reconciliation does this describe?
4. Is Jesus being realistic in v4 about our capacity to keep forgiving? What limits or boundaries might we want to put around the practice of forgiveness, to keep people safe?
5. Read Matthew 18:21-35. What is the motivation for Christians to forgive those who hurt us? What stops us from doing this?
6. Why does Jesus use the illustration of the servant in vv7-10? Is generosity in our relationships an 'optional extra' of Christian discipleship, something that we should be praised for doing?
7. Can you think of opportunities to practice generosity in your relationships: at home? At Church? At work, study or other group you are part of?
8. What practices does your Life Group have about forgiveness and reconciliation?

Study 4: Generous Giving — Luke 21:1-4

1. How does it make you feel to consider the topic of financial generosity?
2. What attitudes and practices to giving were part of the life of your family while you were growing up?
3. Why are we tempted to 'let people know' what we give away? Read Luke 20:45-47. What were the attitudes and practices of the 'teachers of the law' to money and generosity?
4. The 'two small copper coins' that the widow gave to the collection box in the temple were the smallest permissible gift that could be brought. How did Jesus know that her gift was greater than all the others?
5. How much of our income should we give away?
6. How do we know who and what to be generous towards?
7. What stops us from being truly generous with our money? Are there attitudes and practices towards the use of money that you need to repent of?
8. Read Acts 2:42-47 about the life of the early Church in Jerusalem. How did they practice generosity? What might that look like in our own church context?

Notes