

Journey CHURCH

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Life on Mission – Leader Guide Session Two: Connect

MEMORY VERSE: “While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Matthew 9:10-13)

It may seem obvious, but if we never connect and spend time with people who are far from God, it’s going to be impossible to introduce them to Jesus. Jesus set an example for us by hanging around with people who needed Him – people who were infected with sin and needed to be healed, not just physically but spiritually. Jesus often did this around a meal, but also as He walked around throughout His day. He didn’t wait for them to come to Him – He went to them. He was always connecting with people, engaging them in conversation. More often than not, He didn’t preach at them but asked them questions. He even answered their questions with more questions! Many of us tend to keep our social and relational circles limited to people who act and believe just as we do. Or we think that connecting with unbelievers means preaching at them, not just hanging out with them. Jesus calls His followers not only to believe in Him, but to live like Him. That often begins with choosing to connect with people who are far from God.

God is at work in us long before we have any idea of His plans. So our stories, like the ones we’ve just heard, are filled with detours, mistakes, resistance, and hard lessons. God works in all of it to conform us to the image of His Son.

Discussion Questions

1) What was your most intense take-away from the stories and teaching we just heard about the importance of hanging out with people who are not followers of Jesus?

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- 2) What are some of your non-church activities (such as sports, work, volunteering at your child's school, etc.) where you could connect with people who aren't Christians? Since you're already in those places, what can you do to initiate relationships with others?
- 3) What reward do the servants receive who invest successfully?
- 4) Unbelievers don't just hear our words; they watch the way we live. Is there any behavior in your life that doesn't align with the faith you profess? (This doesn't have to be some glaring moral flaw. Do you drive in a way that honors Jesus? Do you gossip or put others down? Do your actions and attitudes show love and respect to all? Would some of your friends at work be surprised to find out you're a Christian?)
- 5) What happens to the third servant? Why do you suppose the master is so harsh with him?
- 6) Are there places where you regularly hang out with unbelievers? What other places where you live could you consider visiting? Or, as Jim Tune put it, "What's your Starbucks?"
- 7) Gene Appel talked about the importance of good questions. These are not "pickup lines" or interrogations. They are not yes/no questions. In your own life, what kinds of questions draw you into conversation?
- 8) What was a take-away from Cam Huxford's story about the group of women who deliver cookies to the local strip club? How close have you ever come to that kind of "outrageous" behavior for Jesus?
- 9) What barriers get in the way of you inviting your neighbors into your home for a simple meal and conversation?
- 10) How did the testimonies of the people on the receiving end of hospitality (such as the three waitresses, Kylie, Lucy, and Nicki) affect you?