



Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

**USE THIS GUIDE TO PREPARE FOR THE DISCUSSIONS IN COMMUNITY GROUP.**

## Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

### The Big Idea

*Don't make optional what God makes standard.*

### Message Summary

*Sometimes when we think about a new vehicle, we think that only a limited number of people can afford to purchase the optional equipment. As we start chapter 6 in the Matthew, we find Jesus telling the crowd about 3 things that are standard in the lives of His followers: giving, praying, and fasting. Unfortunately, many followers of Jesus today have again assumed that only the "best of the best" Christians really succeed in these areas. But Jesus didn't say if; He said when. Don't make optional what Jesus makes standard.*

### Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- A familiar accusation made against the church is that it is "full of hypocrites." Surely there's some truth to that. How would you respond to someone if they said that to you?
- Remember that identity fuels activity. How does that statement help as Jesus talks about the rhythms of our giving, praying, and fasting? Have you ever done these three things in order to try and be a "good" Christian?
- How can knowing who we are in Christ help us navigate the choppy waters between moving from "if" to "when" in these three rhythms?
- Throughout this section, Jesus talks a lot about doing these things in secret, and yet He just told the same crowd to let their good deeds be seen in order for God to be praised (see Matthew 5:16). We know that Jesus didn't contradict Himself, so what do you think He was saying?
- The word "when" speaks of consistency and intentionality. Do those words describe giving, praying, and fasting in your life? Which one are you the most intentional about? The least intentional?
- In what situations do you think fasting might be a proper spiritual activity in your life?
- When would you be more likely to set aside a consistent and intentional block of time for prayer? Morning? Afternoon? Before bed? How much time will you start with?
- How can you make giving and fasting regular rhythms in your life?