

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.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.**

## Consider...

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

### Message Summary

Things are starting to heat up between Jesus and the religious leaders, and Jesus knows that the hardest part of His rescue mission is drawing closer. In Luke 14:25-35, we find Jesus beginning to prepare His followers for the pain that lies ahead of them because He knew that **counting the cost helps us pay the price**. To that end, Jesus opened the eyes of His followers to 3 things that can diminish our commitment to the rescue mission that He's called us to be a part of.

- 1. Don't let the crowd change your commitment:** So often we'll hear church leaders talking about big churches or little churches being better or worse than the other, but Jesus never did that. Jesus was perfectly okay with changing crowd sizes, but He warned against allowing those changes to negatively affect the commitment of His disciples to the mission. Crowds come and go, but our commitment must remain steady even when the majority of the people following Jesus don't.
- 2. Don't let the cross change your commitment:** It's easy to get a little squirmy when Jesus starts to talk about the cost of following Him because we've been taught that grace is free (and it is). But it WILL cost us something to follow Jesus because it costs Him everything to save us! What I love about Jesus is that these aren't hidden costs like you might find on a cell phone contract! These are costs that He wants us to know about upfront, and the price is clear: death. Following Jesus means following Him to the cross, and while that's a high price, Jesus knew that if we'd count the cost on the front end, it would be easier to pay the price on the back end.
- 3. Don't let the culture change your commitment:** When Jesus spoke about salt losing its saltiness, His hearers would have immediately thought of the salt in the Dead Sea which didn't taste as salty because it was surrounded by other minerals and contaminants. In other words, the things surrounding the salt would have diluted its saltiness. In the same way, people who are all in on the rescue mission Jesus calls us to cannot allow the culture around them to dilute who they are. Rather, as the salt of the earth, people on the rescue mission are to be agents of change to the culture around them.

### Discuss

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

- Give some examples of times that people tend to get "caught up in the crowd." (Hint: they don't have to be bad things!) Have you ever experienced that? If so, describe the experience.
- Read Exodus 23:2 and talk about why crowds aren't always the best leaders. How much harder is it to not follow a crowd when it's made up of people you love? Obviously, Jesus isn't telling us to hate people (esp. our families!), so what do you think He meant in v. 26?
- Have you ever been surprised by hidden fees? How did it make you feel? How important is it that Jesus wanted His followers to walk with Him with "eyes wide open?"
- What do you think it means to "carry your cross?" What light does Luke 9:22-26 shine on it?
- Read Romans 12:1-2. What's the difference between being conformed and being transformed? Which one allows us to discern God's will? How does renewing our minds help in the process of transformation? According to Ephesians 5:26, how does God renew us? What could happen in your life and in your surroundings if you committed to reading a chapter a day in the Bible? (1 John is a great place to start and you could have the whole book read by next Community Group)