



NAC-USA
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE

Who is my
neighbor?

Loving our
neighbor

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

The Last
Supper

2015

March

Going Deeper

Who is not my neighbor?

For our parable, the lawyer's question is misguided. To ask "who is my neighbor" is a polite way of asking, "Who is not my neighbor?" or "Who does not deserve my love?" or "Whose lack of food or shelter can I ignore?" or "Whom can I hate?" The answer Jesus gives is, "No one." Everyone deserves that love – local or foreigner, Jews or gentile, everyone.

How can we start to move toward Jesus' teaching of loving our neighbor?

What gets in the way of us doing this?

2. Read the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 together.

3. Share any insights you gained by reading that you may never have considered before.

The love for God is inseparably linked with the love for our neighbor. But who is our neighbor? It's the one who is sick, who is in prison, and the stranger who is so different, whose culture is different, who has a different faith, a different nature, and who has a different opinion from your own. You cannot choose your neighbors; God puts them in your life.

"Who is my neighbor?" is a central question in the church and in congregations today. It's a question you've probably heard not only in church, but in conversations about immigration policy, race, special needs, and sexual identity. It's a question that ultimately relates to the way we treat those on the outskirts of society, such as the homeless or the poor. The answer to "who is my neighbor" is easy—the one in need.

Discussion Questions after video:

1. What does "reaction" mean to you? What does the term "relationship" mean to you? How might you "react" to a homeless person on the street? How does that compare to what the Good Samaritan does in the parable?

2. Take a minute to review your list of neighbors. What would it require for you to move from the first definition of a neighbor to the fourth definition of a neighbor?

Going Deeper

A different view

Martin Luther King Jr. once preached on the parable of the Good Samaritan: "I'm going to tell you what imagination tells me. It's possible these men were afraid...And so the first question that the priest [and] the Levite ask was, 'If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?'...But then the Good Samaritan came by, and he reversed the question: 'If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?'"

Discuss this viewpoint.

Think of someone that you listed as a neighbor. Are you afraid to help? Or can you turn the question around?

Our neighbor is not just the person who is in distress, but he is also the one who provides help. Remember the words, "Go and do likewise."? This means: be a neighbor to those around you, reaching out to them and helping them, and doing more than is required.

The message of the parable is this: help because helping is the way of life that Christ taught us.

Make time for others. Galatians 6:2 says "*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*". It may not be possible to take away all the pain, all the suffering, or all the problems of our neighbor, but we can make it easier for our brother or sister when we help them bear their burden. We have to have an open ear and an open heart in order to perceive their suffering.

Help others in concrete ways. James 2:15-16 says "*If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?*"

Recognize Respond Relieve and Restore Renew

These 5 words are the core values of re Charitable Ministry, an affiliated ministry of the New Apostolic Church USA. Through these 5 values we desire to turn the call of Jesus to love our neighbors into real, actionable service in the world.

Ultimately, we should all be neighbors and serve others, whether on our own, among our families and friends, or in our congregations and communities. When we serve others in this way, we demonstrate a practical understanding of these concepts. Often, however, understanding the need for such a transformation is easy, but we struggle with the question – how and where to start? If the journey of becoming a true neighbor is such an experience for you, serving with re Charitable Ministry might broaden your awareness.

To learn more about one of their humanitarian projects or ways that your congregational initiatives can be supported, visit their website at re.nac-usa.org or find them on Facebook.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss how you can make helping your "neighbor" a way of life. What teachings from Jesus can be directly applied to our lives to make this happen? Discuss the challenges of these teachings.

Discuss how each of the following five words are modeled by the Good Samaritan and consider how each can be applied in your life:

1. Recognize: We must recognize that every person is created in the image of God. Because of this realization we recognize the need to create a relationship with the people we serve in order to determine their need and work to serve them effectively.

How did the Good Samaritan recognize the man on the street? How can we strive to recognize what is needed in the people around us? Give an example of when you have failed or chosen not to recognize, like the priest and the Levite.

2. Respond: Jesus came to “proclaim good news...bind up the brokenhearted... proclaim freedom...and comfort all who mourn.” (Isaiah 61:1-3) We respond to His call to serve in the same way.

How do we, as Christians, respond to Jesus’ call to serve? What does it look like if we do it out of obligation instead of love? Is the response as profound?

3. Relieve and Restore: We strive to relieve people’s physical needs and work to restore and strengthen people spiritually.

Think and discuss how the Samaritan not only relieved the man’s physical needs, but also put into effect the way to restoration (perhaps emotionally, his sense of shame, etc.).

4. **Renew:** As we work to relieve and restore people, the result is a reciprocal faith, hope and feeling of excitement. This work brings us to new perspectives and a renewed relationship with Christ.

Think of when the Good Samaritan returned after his journey. What was renewed in his life? How was the man he helped renewed? When you serve others, how is your relationship with Christ renewed?

Session 3: The Last Supper

Video/Discussion notes:

The Holy Communion we celebrate today means a few different things for us.

1. It is a **meal of Remembrance** of the suffering and innocent death of Jesus Christ for our salvation. It emphasizes that Jesus Christ is true Man who had to suffer real death. This is not only a matter of remembrance directed toward the past, but rather also a reminder of the certainty of Christ's current presence and His future kingdom. How can remembering Christ's sacrifice on the cross, or His current presence in your life change how you participate in Holy Communion?

Additional Content

The scapegoat & The Lamb

We can find some similarities to Jesus' sacrifice when we look at the "scapegoat" designated by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. Once a year, The High Priest of Israel sacrificed a bull for a sin offering for his own sins and subsequently took two goats to the door of the tabernacle with a view to dealing with the corporate sins of God's people. One was "The Lord's Goat", which was offered as a blood sacrifice, and the other was the "Azazel" scapegoat to be sent away into the wilderness. The High Priest confessed the sins of the Israelites to Yahweh placing them figuratively on the head of the Azazel scapegoat, who "took them away" never to be seen again.

The Passover—a tradition still celebrated today by Jewish people—celebrates the lamb that was sacrificed and whose blood was painted upon the door mantels of the Jewish slaves to deliver them from the angel of death during Moses' time. This experience was the catalyst for the slaves' freedom from bondage.

Jesus' sacrifice was so far above these two traditions from the Old Testament. He is sometimes referred to as the Paschal Lamb, but He gave His life willingly (unlike the Passover lamb) and His death delivers all mankind from the slavery of sin and eternal death.

2. Holy Communion is a **meal of Fellowship** between the Son of God and His apostles, repeating the original institution of Holy Communion at the Last Supper. The Risen Lord also has fellowship with the circle of believers who worthily partake for their salvation. Those assembled in the congregation also have fellowship with one another in Holy Communion. This can also be heard in the communal aspects of the Lord's Prayer, where we pray for provision, deliverance, and forgiveness for each other.
3. Holy Communion is a **meal of Profession**. When we partake we "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes". The profession of the death, resurrection, and return of Jesus Christ is part of the fundamental profession of the Christian faith. The emphasis on the confessional nature of the holy meal also serves to counteract thoughtless or purely habitual partaking in the sacrament. When you celebrate Holy Communion, do realize you are publically professing your faith?
4. Holy Communion is a **meal of the Future**. We celebrate the future Marriage Feast in heaven. In Jesus Christ the kingdom of God has drawn near. Until the future and ultimate unification of the bride with the bridegroom, the congregation experiences its most intimate fellowship with the Lord through Holy Communion.

Discussion Questions:

1. As we look at the Last Supper, what are some initial thoughts or feelings you have about all that Jesus did and experienced?

2. **Remembrance** What parts of Christ's suffering and death have personal meaning to you? In every divine service, do we visualize the suffering and death of Christ and stand in awe of this moment of Holy Communion? How does Christ's victory and resurrection strengthen you today?

3. **Fellowship** Discuss the three components of the meal of fellowship from the Catechism.

NAC Catechism

8.2.5

The institution of Holy Communion by Jesus Christ

Already before Jesus Christ established Holy Communion in the presence of His Apostles, He said: "... unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6: 53). "Flesh and blood" are a reference to Holy Communion, which, as the Lord hereby emphasized, is indispensable for salvation. Also significant here are the additional statements of the Lord: "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life ... He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in Him" (John 6: 54, 56).

The Synoptic Gospels relate that Jesus Christ shared a meal together with His Apostles on the Feast of Passover. Matthew 26: 26–29 describes how the Lord instituted Holy Communion: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom'" (Mark 14: 22–25; Luke 22: 14–20).

While the account in the gospel of Mark largely coincides with the account in the gospel of Matthew, we find the following additions in Luke: "Do this in remembrance of Me" and "this cup is the new covenant in My blood" (Luke 22: 19–20). With the words: "Do this in remembrance of Me", the Lord gave His Apostles the commission and authority to celebrate Holy Communion in the same way as He Himself had done.

4. Profession What about Christ's death are you proclaiming? Is Holy Communion your only profession of the Lord during the week?

5. The Future Discuss how Jesus words during the Last Supper also spoke of the future.

Although Holy Communion is communal, how we celebrate it is quite individual. Discuss the personal relationships each disciple had with Jesus in that moment. How, through your life have you shown characteristics of each of these in your relationship with Jesus? Share one or two with the group.

- John: _____

- Peter: _____

- Thomas: _____

- Philip: _____

- Judas: _____

