

More like Jesus

1: An Attitude of Gratitude

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. You could try this...

Share: Who are the people who you think of as particularly thankful.

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

Each think of two things you are thankful for. Go twice round the group in turn. Each say a short prayer: 'Thank you God for [one thing]. Amen'
All join in with the 'Amens'

WORD

In this series, we're looking at Jesus's responses to people he met in Luke 17-18. In particular, we're looking at what we can learn about our attitudes to things that we have.

Read Luke 17:11-19

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

- Imagine you were one of the lepers who had been healed...

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- * What reasons might you have for not going back and saying thank you to Jesus? (One is that the priests probably didn't like Jesus)
- * What might stop us from giving thanks to God in our lives today?
- How many different ways can you think of in which we can express our thanks to God?
 - * Which do you find easier or more difficult? Why?
- Paul urges us to always be thankful (eg Ephesians 5:20). J John describes it as having an 'Attitude of Gratitude'
 - * If we were more thankful, what differences could it make to our lives?
 - * What difference should it make if we remembered God's mercy, grace and love towards us? (see Romans 12:1-2)
 - * What could you practically do to have more of an 'attitude of gratitude' in your life?
- Jesus point out that the person who gave thanks was someone who his listeners would find the most surprising person to give thanks. If you had to re-write this story today, which types of people today would you put in the role of the Samaritan?

WHAT NEXT?

- As a nation, we have lots to be thankful for. Pray for leaders, politicians and others who make decisions in the UK about how we use what we have.
- Maybe in 2s/3s: Share both stories from your lives of good news and situations that are not so good. Then pray for one another.

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2: An Attitude for Asking

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. You could try this...
Each share: What do you think makes a good story?

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

In silence, each imagine a situation that you spend your time in. Imagine how it would be if you & the others in it were (even more) committed to serving God and serving others. Pray that this would happen. Afterwards, those who want to might like to share what you prayed for & you could all join in praying for it.

WORD

Read Luke 18:1-14

You could read it by people taking different parts:

The narrator (Luke), Jesus, the widow, the judge, the Pharisee, the tax collector

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

In the first parable (verses 1-8):

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- Jesus tells the story to show his disciples that they 'should always pray and not give up'
 - * When do you think people are most likely to give up praying?
 - * Are there things that you have given up praying for? Why?
- In what ways do you think God is like the unjust judge – and in what ways is he not?
- The widow is pleading for justice.
 - * What things are you most committed to asking God for?
 - * Are there things that you think you should be more committed to asking God for?

In the second parable (verses 9-14):

- Jesus portrays the Pharisee as doing virtuous things – fasting twice a week and gave a tenth of all he got (v12).
 - * What was good or bad about what the Pharisee was doing?
 - * How would you describe the attitudes of the Pharisee and the tax collector?
 - * In what ways might we come to God with wrong attitudes?

WHAT NEXT?

- New housing is being built in Alsager. Pray for the people moving to the town. Pray that as a church we would be actively welcoming them. Are there things you could do to welcome people?
- Pray for some of the things you feel you should be praying more for after today's session.

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3: An Attitude of Giving

WELCOME

Spend time relaxing & sharing together. You could try this...

Each tell the group about one really good purchase you've made.

WORSHIP

Use music, silence, prayer, meditation, reflection, songs, hymns, etc. or be creative with drawing, writing, symbols, poetry etc to help people to draw near to God. You could try this...

Play some quiet instrumental music or a song which worships God.

Each close your eyes and picture your financial statements (bank, credit cards etc). Imagine looking at them with Jesus. How do you feel? What would you say to him? What would he say? Talk to him about them in silence and ask him for help with managing your finances.

WORD

Read Luke 18:18-30

Discuss your initial reactions to the passage:

- Does anything in the passage jump out at you? Why?
- Does anything connect with something you've been doing, reading or thinking about?
- Is there anything you haven't noticed before?

Now use **some** of the questions below (*and set a time limit to leave yourselves time to pray!*)

- In the previous parable (v12), Jesus uses the Pharisee giving a tenth of his income as an example of someone being virtuous. Here he expects the man to give away **all** his possessions (although not his source of income).
 - * If you were the man, how would you feel?
 - * Is Jesus being unfair on this man? Is he being realistic?

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- The man is described as rich and having a lot of possessions. Why does Jesus say he lacks one thing? (v22)
- In response to another question, Jesus commends a summary of the law as 'Love God with all your... and love your neighbour as yourself' (see Luke 10:27). How does loving God and loving others apply to money and possessions?
- Jesus talks quite a lot about money (and so do people in conversation – especially shopping!), but we don't often in church.
 - * How do you feel about talking about money at church?
 - * As a church we rely on people giving money (and time) to enable us to meet and to serve our local community and elsewhere. Have a look at the statements on the front of the Giving for Growth leaflet (in the porch or under 'downloads' on the website <http://www.christchurchalsager.uk/downloads.html>)
 - How do you feel about these statements? Which ones particularly strike you? Do any surprise you?
 - How do other people within/outside the church get impacted by us giving more or less?
- For a humorous look at the subject, you could watch the Skit Guys Video at <https://skitguys.com/videos/item/the-skinny-on-tithing> and discuss how you feel about it.

WHAT NEXT?

- Pray for our church – that our attitude to money would be healthy and that we would use the money we have wisely.
- If you haven't had a look through the Giving for Growth leaflet, please do... and pray about the right way to respond
- Pray for one another – any hopes/worries for the summer.

EXTRA

If you want to think more about money, on your own or as a group, then you could use the 'Stewards of Money' mini-series of Growth Group notes from Autumn 2007 (on the website)