

**HPAC SMALL GROUPS CURRICULUM**  
**WEEK 3: VISIT & INVITE**

## INTRODUCTION

Today marks the third week of meeting together as a Small Group! We are thankful to God that in just a couple of weeks we have already begun to experience and celebrate wins together. God is moving in our groups and each of our lives and as we continue to pray and fast together, for our friends and each other, we will see God respond!

Let's recap what we've done together as a group so far!

- > In Week 1, we identified at least 7 friends that we would begin praying and fasting for. Together we signed up for a specific day of prayer and fasting each week that we would bring our friends and their needs before the Lord.
- > In Week 2, we contacted our friends and let them know that we were praying for them and interceding on their behalf. We attempted to make meaningful connections with them and let the light of Christ shine through to them. We also continued to pray and fast for our friends!

Now, the next step in our spiritual preparation, is that we are going to ***VISIT*** our friends in person this week and ***INVITE*** them to join us for Friends Day, on Sunday May 2<sup>nd</sup>!

As we continue to pray and fast for our friends, this next step is so vital for our growth as a Small Group. We must not be afraid or embarrassed to invite our friends to come to church, or to join our Small Group!

In the first two lessons, we have been using the Parable of the Great Banquet as a scriptural context to help us understand the importance of reaching our friends. Let's review this parable again:



## THE GREAT BANQUET PARABLE

- > **Luke 14:16-23 (NLT)** – “16 Jesus replied with this story: “A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. 17 When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, ‘Come, the banquet is ready.’ 18 But they all began making excuses. One said, ‘I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.’ 19 Another said, ‘I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.’ 20 Another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ 21 “The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, ‘Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ 22 After the servant had done this, he reported, ‘There is still room for more.’ 23 So his master said, ‘Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full.”

## THERE IS ROOM FOR EVERYONE

After the host had prepared his feast and sent his servants to tell his guests, many of the guests began to make excuses as to why they could not come. In last week’s lesson, we discussed that sometimes people will not be open to our efforts to invite them to come to church or to join our Small Group. But we must not be discouraged by negative responses to our witness. Instead, we must **stay encouraged** and be persistent in our witnessing. **We must realize that there is room for everyone at the Master’s table.**

Stop and think about this for a second. When you first talked to some of your friends and let them know that you were praying for them, what was their response? If it was positive, then thank the Lord and continue to reach out to them. If it was negative, instead of giving up on them, continue to pray for them and ask God to give you another opportunity to reach them.

As disciples of Christ, we must learn to see people as Christ sees them. Christ does not see people only as they are, but He sees them for what they can become. He sees you and I this way...He also sees our friends this way. We must pray and ask the Lord to help us see others this way. Some of our friends may make excuses and not be initially open to our efforts to witness to them, but we must not give up on them! We must continue to pray for them and let the light of Christ shine through us.



Though they may not fully realize it now, our friends need Jesus in their lives. No matter what their story is, no matter what they've done, no matter how far off track their lives seem, there is room for them at the Master's table. There is room for them in God's House.

In **verses 21 and 22** of Luke 14, we see the Master's response to the excuses of his guests:

- > 21 "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' 22 After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.'

Though the Master was displeased with the excuses of those who were initially invited, He did not allow this to discourage Him, or to cancel his banquet. Instead, he sent His servants to **go quickly** into the town and **invite** those who were poor, crippled, blind and lame (those who had real needs). We can take away a few important lessons from the Master's response here:

## **GO QUICKLY**

Notice the instruction of the Master to His servants: He told them to "**go quickly...**" Why is this significant? Because, everything was already prepared and set and there was a *limited amount of time* for guests to come and sit at the table.

As we pray for our friends and plan to invite them to Friends Day, we must realize that there is a small window of time left to reach them. We must act quickly to reach as many people with the message of Christ as possible.

In Colossians 4, the Apostle Paul writes to the church from prison, asking them to continue in prayer for him, that God may open the door for him to share the Word of God. Additionally, he instructs the saints to walk in wisdom as they reach the unchurched and make best use of the time they have – how? By *sharing the Word of God*.



- > **Colossians 4:2-5 (ESV)** – “2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. 5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.”

In Matthew 24, Jesus Christ foretells of the rapture of the Church – the return of Christ for those who are saved. In this message to the church, He emphasizes that many people will be going about life as usual, completely unaware that Christ is about to return. Because no one knows when Christ will return, we **must constantly be ready** for His return.

- > **Matthew 24:36-39 (ESV)** – “36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. 37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

In both of these Scripture passages we realize that the time that we have here on Earth is valuable and not to be wasted! We must spend our time focused on reaching the lost, and we must be ready because Christ’s return is imminent!

## **THE NEEDY**

The other takeaway from the Master’s instruction, is that He specifically told His servants to target and invite the *needy*...meaning people with real needs. He told them to invite the poor, the blind, the lame, and the crippled. What was the Master saying?

He was not proposing that the only people that need Jesus are those with major deficits or the physically handicapped. What He was saying is, invite people who have real needs to come to my house – people that need the miraculous! Now, before you start marking people off of your friends list, understand the context of this parable.



Those who were initially invited were friends and guests of the Master. They all gave excuses as to why they could not come. Then the Master said, instead of sticking to the official guest list, open up my house to everyone! My house and this banquet is for those who are in need.

Our friends may not necessarily be poor, or blind, or crippled...but *everyone has very specific needs* that only Jesus can meet. The point of the Master was, invite those who are in need. When we look at our friends, though their physical man may be okay, their spiritual man is in need of a miracle – they are in need of a touch from Jesus!

The way we will help our friends in need is by sharing what we have – the love of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

- > **Hebrews 13:16 (ESV)** – “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”

As Christians empowered by the Holy Spirit, we have an obligation to help those who are in need and to build their faith.

- > **Romans 15:1-2 (MSG)** – “Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, “How can I help?”

## CONCLUSION

After the servants had obeyed the Master – they had gone quickly and invited the needy – the Bible tells us that “*there was still room for more*”. God’s House will never be filled to capacity. Yes, the physical building may have its limitations, but once we surpass those limitations, God will provide a new venue. However, God’s people are not confined to a building. Together, we are the Body of Christ, and there is **always room for more people**.

As we conclude this lesson, and prepare for this week, there are a few important steps we must take together:



- > **STEP 1** – Continue to be faithful to your day of prayer and fasting for your friends.

Ask the Lord to continue to work on their hearts and give you the power to be a witness. Also, ask the Lord to help you see them as He does...people with needs that only God can meet!

- > **STEP 2** – Get in touch with your friends this week and plan to visit them in-person.

Connect with your friends and tell them that you want to stop by and see them briefly this week. Tell them that you have something special for them that you want to give to them.

- > **STEP 3** – Invite them to Friends Day by handing them a physical invitation.

Make sure you emphasize the date of Friends Day (Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>) and tell them you're saving them a spot! There will be free food and beverages for them when they come!

As we continue to seek God together, to intercede and fast for our friends, and invite them to church, we have faith together to believe that God will move on their hearts! When you pray, ask God to give you the opportunity to be a witness to someone. The Lord will put people in your path with needs, who you can share the love of Christ with! Even if you invite more than 7 friends that is okay – remember, there is *always* more room!

