



## Growth Group Discussion Questions

### Lesson: SACRIFICIAL SHARERS

**Key Bible Verses:** Acts 2:42-47; Romans 15:24-29; II Corinthians 8:1-13;  
Hebrews 13:15-16; Philippians 1:3-8

**Spring Quarter - Lesson 3 - Week of April 18, 2021**

#### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- Are you a sunrise, daylight, twilight, or nighttime person?
- When you think of sharing resources with others, do you consider this as being central to your faith? Why or why not?

#### DISCUSSION

Sharing and generosity have been fundamental to the Christian walk from the beginning. While this might be evident from the New Testament, we (in the modern Western world) have an ambivalent view toward generosity and sharing with others. While most of us feel it is good or admirable to share with others, our individualistic, achievement-oriented culture can sometimes seem at odds with the biblical call to lift others up.

1. In what ways do you feel the broader culture supports or undermines the biblical call to generosity and sharing?
2. What is your basic view of what Christians are responsible to do in terms of taking care of those who are in need?

In the early days of the Church, we have clear evidence that the believers supported each other by sharing generously with each other. Read Acts 2:42-47:

1. What stands out to you about these verses?
2. What do you find inspiring about this text?
3. What do you find challenging about this text?
4. Are there portions (be honest) of this passage that you find yourself having a knee-jerk negative reaction to? If so, which portions, and why do you think that is?

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, he encouraged their generosity by doing two things: (1) highlighting the material needs of the relatively poor Christians in Judea and (2) pointing out how the churches in Greece had already made a financial contribution to help them.

Read Romans 15:24-29:

1. How does Paul characterize his visit to Jerusalem?
2. Macedonia and Achaia were regions in Greece. What was their attitude about giving?
3. What is Paul's argument about the Jews sharing spiritually with the Gentiles?

4. What can we learn from what Paul told the Romans about generosity and especially the way he encouraged them to give?

The churches in Greece served as an example to the Roman Christians. In Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth (one of the churches in Achaia), he encouraged them not to rest in their former generosity but to follow through and continue to be generous. To do this, he used the churches north of Greece (Macedonia) as an example. Read II Corinthians 8:1-13.

1. The Macedonian churches (Philippi, Thessalonica, and others) were generous in the midst of trials and even poverty. What example did they set for us?
2. Paul says the Macedonian congregation gave on their own and viewed their financial gifts as a privilege. How does this attitude challenge us in our individualistic Western culture?
3. Paul calls a financial gift an act of grace. How is generous giving an act of God's grace?
4. What is the reason that we are called to be generous?
5. Paul encourages the Corinthians to follow through on their generous intentions. What seems to be going on here and what is the lesson for us?

The author of Hebrews speaks about generosity in terms of a sacrifice to God in Hebrews 13:15-16 (NIV): *"Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that openly profess His name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."* Praising God with our mouths is a sacrifice that pleases God. The author of Hebrews suggests that doing good and sharing with others is another form of sacrifice. In what ways is generous financial giving a sacrifice?

Giving, according to Paul, is an act of grace. Sharing financial resources with each other is a part of sharing and enjoying God's grace with each other. As Paul put it in Philippians, we can share in God's grace. Read Philippians 1:3-8. The Philippians were partners with Paul in the gospel, sharing in God's grace with him. How does this relationship impact your view of sharing and generosity within our congregation?

### **KEYS TO REMEMBER**

- Sharing and generosity have been fundamental to the Church from the beginning.
- Wealthy Christians in the first century shared financial resources with the poor Christians.
- Giving is a privilege.
- Giving is an act of grace.
- Giving must go beyond generous intentions; we must follow through on sharing with others.
- We give because Christ gave it all for us.
- Giving is a pleasing sacrifice to God.
- Sharing in God's grace includes financial giving.

### **PRAYER FOCUS**

Pray that God will help you be generous in giving and sharing with those in need.