

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Matthew 25:31-46 aloud.

1. Who are the two groups in this story?

How does Jesus distinguish between the sheep and the goats?

What happened to the sheep? To the goats?

How do you feel when you hear this passage? Why?

2. What kinds of things did the sheep do but the goats did not?

How would you describe the lifestyle of the sheep? Were they philanthropists or agency founders or humanitarian workers?
They didn't even realize they did it – helping others was part of their normal routine. Perhaps this passage describes a lifestyle rather than a checklist.

When we consider hunger and disease around the world, it can be overwhelming. How does this passage call us to confront those problems?
One at a time. Don't get overwhelmed by global problems.

How do you think Jesus would respond to the idea that “taking care of the poor is the government’s job”?

How would it change the world if each follower of Christ helped the people nearby? What problems would still need to be addressed?
It would make a big difference in wealthy cultures. In some places the poverty is so severe that the community needs outside help.

3. When you see a beggar, how often does it cross your mind that the person might be Jesus?

How would it change your view of people if you saw them as Jesus?

Is it easier to help the rich or the poor? Why?

What are some ways that people could take advantage of our help? What does Jesus say about those situations?
He doesn't say. But he is “loving toward all he has made” (Ps. 145:17), even though we often abuse his gifts.

4. How does the church help us live out this passage?

How much does our congregation live out Matthew 25?

In what ways does this passage depend on individuals rather than the church?
Could you honor these words of Jesus if your church did not? Could you be part of a church that blessed the poor yet fail to be involved yourself?

How can Christians work together to live out this passage?
Spend a day with Cindy Herring at Healing Hands & you'll see! 832-2000.

Come up with some plans to help someone as a group in December. You could join Jason Partlow's group for a worship service at the Pilot gas station on December 10. Contact Jason for more info.

5. If you believe that you are called to provide people with food & drink, hospitality, clothing, and time, what would it cost you?

How could you possibly feed & clothe your own family if you helped others like Jesus said? *See Matthew 6:25-34.*

How might it teach you to trust in God if you lived this passage?
Giving to others always requires faith and builds faith. It means trusting God to take care of us.

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What does this passage call you to do or become? What is one thing that might change in your life if you took this scripture seriously?

III. Other resources

The point – When you serve others, you are serving Jesus.

Prayer

Invite the group to involve their bodies in prayer. You might ask different people to pray for different body parts. As you pray, ask them to touch the part of the body mentioned...

Pray for eyes to see the needs around us,

- hearts that are full of compassion,
- feet that are ready to go where Jesus needs us,
- stomachs – thank God for food and pray for those who hunger,
- minds that are creative for supporting people in need,
- wallets that are available for God to use (not a body part – oh well!),
- and hands that are strong and quick to help.

Pray for God to guide our leaders and congregation through the preacher transition. Pray for the Lockes.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Divide the kids into two groups and get on all fours – sheep & goats.

Read Matthew 25:31-46 aloud. Ask the kids to act it out as you go.

What was the difference between sheep and goats?

What are some ways that kids can help people who are having trouble?

What are some ways that we as a group could help someone in the next few weeks?

You could join Jason Partlow's group for a worship service at the Pilot gas station on December 10. Contact Jason for more info.



November 26, 2006

LIFE Group Guide

Matthew 25 – Serving with love

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: Jesus calls us to serve and help others.

The Sunday service included a celebration of God's work through College Hills to build a house with Habitat. Many of us have been blessed by this effort. This discussion guide will reflect on the call to show our love for others through loving actions.

Leadership tip: LIFE groups have enjoyed a great experience, thanks to your leadership and God's blessing! This fall, LG coaches have been discussing the possibility of forming even stronger groups in 2007. Adding groups increases our capacity to bless members and newcomers.

As we discuss dreams and plans for 2007, we would like to invite all LG leaders to a meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 29 at 6 pm in room 302 in the fellowship center. Bring your spouse, as well as potential leaders.

This meeting will give you a chance to state your preferences for 2007:
--Who would you like to invite as your co-leader?
--What will be the nature of your group next year?
--What will be your group's strategy for inviting new people?

The last meeting of our current groups will be December 10. In mid-December, we will put out sign-up sheets for groups that will launch next year. We will recommend that people try new groups, but nobody will be forced to leave their group or join a new one.

P.S. If you made photos at the last group meeting, please send them in.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ Each person name one way to get rid of leftover turkey.
- ❖ How were you involved in the Habitat House? How were you blessed by the experience?
- ❖ When have you seen Christians doing a great job helping to make the world a better place?