

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 6:25-34 aloud.

1. What do you worry about?

How might our worries be different than the concerns Jesus lists (food, drink, clothes)? When have you gone hungry? When have you had no clothes?

Ancient people were one dry season away from starvation. That’s why Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread.

How do birds survive without working? How are flowers clothed?

2. What are some ways that worry helps you? What does it add to your life?

It might help you anticipate problems, but it doesn’t make you any taller.

What are some ways that worry distracts you?

3. In what ways is this passage challenging?

In what ways is this passage comforting?

4. What does it mean to seek first God’s kingdom?

What is the promise that goes with putting God first?

How is this an antidote to worrying?

How would you know you were putting God’s kingdom and righteousness first?

Where do you find God’s kingdom? What is the kingdom to you?
We see glimpses of the kingdom whenever it is evident that God is reigning. And that’s not only at church (or always at church).

5. Contrast prayer with worry. How does each help you?

What are some ways to focus your prayers when you are concerned about a particular issue?

Fasting, written prayer, asking others to pray with & for you.

6. What are some reasons that we worry?

Worry is a down payment on a bill we do not yet owe (and might not ever).

How does worrying about the future diminish your ability to deal with the present?

If worry keeps you from dealing well with today’s issues, how does it affect your future success?

Today’s mishandled situation becomes tomorrow’s regret, and it usually creates more problems.

Ila. Group discussion alternative *Instead of the “normal” discussion, try this exercise to promote better hearing of the scripture. Spend time in quiet reflection on this passage. Select three readers to read the entire text out loud slowly, with a minute or two of silence between each reading. It would be best if the readers used different translations.*

After the third reading followed by a period of silence, use the following questions as a guide for discussion.

What did you hear in this passage that you had not heard before?

What are some of the key themes from this passage?

What are some ways this passage connects with your life?

† **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 is one area of life where you would like to increase your trust in God to provide?

III. Other resources

The point – Seek first the kingdom of God, and all the things you worry about will fall into place.

Prayer ideas

This text encourages us to put the kingdom first, so allow some time for kingdom prayers...

Pray for God's reign in a foreign nation.

Pray for God's reign in our county.

Pray for God's reign on the street where you live.

Pray for God to reign in your heart in a greater way.

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

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.*

What is one thing you worry about?

If you could be any animal, what would you be?

For younger kids, have them act it out & everyone guess.

What would be some good things about being that animal?

Read Matthew 6:25-27 (or you could go through 34) aloud.

Who provides for the animals?

If God provides for animals in these ways, how do you think he will take care of you?

Sing "Seek Ye First."



March 25, 2007

LIFE Group Guide

Matthew 6 – Trusting God

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: Put God first and trust him to provide.

Larry Locke will complete his preaching ministry at the end of March. He will take the month of April as a sabbatical, and then he will continue to serve in a new role in May. For the March 25 sermon, Larry has selected one of the most familiar passages of the Bible, Matthew 6:25-34.

Matthew 6 is both comforting and challenging. It invites us to trust God rather than worry. It assures us that God will provide in every situation. At a time of change within our congregation, it reminds us that God will provide for our church and for our spiritual needs.

Leadership tip: Remember that the goal of the group is to build faith. That means being flexible enough to serve attendees, even if you have to "punt the lesson" on rare occasions.

Larry's retirement will affect people in different ways. Some will grieve, while others will see a pulpit change as positive. Use an ice-breaker to gauge the intensity of feeling. Pray for wisdom.

I. Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What did you think of the services this morning?
- ❖ Sing "Seek Ye First."
- ❖ What did you do for Spring Break?
- ❖ Who is going to win the NCAA basketball tournament?