

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Session 5: Go Be The Church—Challenges

(Week 5, November 6–12)

GROUP DISCUSSION

Begin this week's session by reviewing what we have considered since Week 1.

Emmanuel, go be the church at (see if your group can name these with minimal assistance):

1. Home
2. Work
3. Community
4. In and through my church (ministry and mission)

Jesus said: *In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.* John 16:33 NIV

(Share from The Message paraphrase: *In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties.* John 16:33 MSG)

Ask the group to discuss some of the challenges of being the church:

- At home
(Possible replies: single/live alone, unsupportive/non-believing spouse, rejection by adult family, addiction, life issues such as anger and abuse, different religious beliefs/world religions, traditions)
- At work
(Possible replies: busy work schedule, ridicule by co-workers, fear of what they may think of me and my faith, rejection, I do not know "enough" of the Bible to answer their questions if they ask)
- In my community
(Possible replies: new in the area, unsure of what I can do, life habits that might contradict my profession of faith, fear of being known as a Jesus-freak, rejection, busy life)
- In and through my church at Emmanuel
(Possible replies: I'm not as gifted as others, I don't know what I can do to serve, others can do a better job, I'm not needed, rejection if I mess up, I'd rather just attend, I don't feel valued, I'm too busy).

Can we agree as a group that it is NOT always easy to be the church?

Read John 1:11 NLT—*He came to his own people, and even they rejected him.*

- Share a time when you have been rejected because of your faith.
- Matthew 5:10 NLT—*God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right.*

Ask someone to read Luke 4:16–30.

- Jesus was rejected by his own community, but he didn't shy away from his faith or keep quiet.
- Our faith in Jesus is meant to be personal, but not private. Discuss the difference as a group.
(Host note: We are called to have a personal relationship with God by faith in Jesus Christ. We are also called to share our faith by service and communication with others so that they may believe and follow).

Read Jesus's words in Luke 10:16 NLT—*Anyone who accepts your message is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting me. And anyone who rejects me is rejecting God, who sent me.*

- Discuss possible reasons why our culture seems to reject God, the church, and the Good News of Jesus's love.
- Americans increasingly do not trust the church or pastors as confidence levels have eroded to historic lows for both. According to a Gallup poll, only 31 percent of Americans say they have a lot of trust in the church or organized religion. How can we change this trend by being the church no matter how difficult the challenges may be?

WEEKLY BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. John 16:33 NIV

PRAYER FOCUS

Ask God to help you overcome the challenges you may face as you go be the church. Thank God for sending His Son to set an example of perseverance for you to follow.