

12 neighbors: Discussion Guide

Week One : Understanding Poverty

Note: In this episode, you will hear briefly from several "neighbors" whose stories we will get to know more fully throughout the course of the next six episodes.

Pre-Film Question

Read Mark 12:30-31 and Galatians 5:14

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: "love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

"For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command:

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:14 (NIV)

Before watching the film, discuss as a group;

Who is your neighbor (*characteristics, etc.*) and what does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?

Also, for your first meeting, you might consider starting with introductions and asking each person to share their goals for being part of this discussion group.

Watch the "Understanding Poverty" episode 1

Discussion Questions

1. What are your initial thoughts, impressions or takeaways from the film?
2. In what ways did the film challenge your personal definition of who **your neighbor** is?

Optionally, you could read/discuss Luke 10:25-37, the story of the Good Samaritan, which addresses this very question, "who is your neighbor".

3. For you, how important is this question **"What does it mean to love your neighbor?"**, and what are the biggest challenges in living this out?

4. In what ways did the film inform or challenge your understanding of what poverty is?
5. How did the film challenge your assumptions around why someone might be poor or marginalized? How does your understanding influence how you might help?
6. Can you share a story where you were in a situation where receiving help from someone made you feel weak, or ashamed, or powerless? What would it be like to experience this daily? How would it affect your sense of identity and value?

Father Gregory Boyle: "The principal suffering of the poor throughout history and scripture is shame and disgrace."

Julie regarding the food bank: "it felt very undignified. I just felt really gross after."

Victoria: "In our society those kind of labels, when you start buying into that stuff, you start losing dignity and respect for yourself and you start believing that stuff."

Nikki: "It makes people feel less than. It makes people feel unimportant. It makes people feel as if they have no control over their lives."

7. What did you think of the film characters' definition of what it really means to love your neighbor? What resonated the most with you?

Josh, "It's not something you can throw money at. You have to throw your time."

Jenny, "It's showing them that they are worthy of you stopping, and listening, and sharing your stories together."

Andy, "It starts with humility. You have to come into the relationship assuming you don't have the answers."

Del, "Your neighbor could be your enemy too. You've got to break bread with people, man!"

Father Greg, "It was the imagining of a circle of compassion with nobody outside of it." And "the neighbor is the other. The neighbor is the one who is outside... and that's radical."

Nikki, "we are asked to serve in our workplaces, in our families, in our friendships, in our churches, in our communities"

Assessment

Assess the priority that **“loving your neighbor”** currently holds in your life. How do you feel about it? Are there changes you'd like to make in order to make this more central to your lifestyle?

Action

Spend time this week reading scripture about God' heart for the poor and marginalized and how He calls us to respond.

Suggested Passages on **“loving your neighbor”**

Isaiah 58

Isaiah 61:1

Jeremiah 22:3

Jeremiah 22:15-16

Matthew 19:21

Matthew 25:35-40

Luke 4:18-19

Luke 10:25-37

Luke 11:41

Luke 12:32-34

Luke 14:15-23

Luke 18:18-22 NET

John 21:15

1 Corinthians 13:3

Galatians 2:10

James 1:27

James 2:8

James 2:17-18

1 John 3:17

1 John 4:20