

Gathering@Home Guide: July 20, 2025

1. Welcome

- Decide when during the meeting to eat and share communion together
- Links to ALL resources related to this meeting:
 - <https://www.knexionschurch.com/discussion-tools>

2. Start with Gratitude moment and prayer

- talk about importance of gratitude relating to joy and connection to God
- Ask people to reflect on a recent event this week that they're grateful for
- the leader and/or participants share a gratitude if they are comfortable
- pray, including any shared gratitudes and for peace, focus from distractions as you continue

3. Worship together

- live music if applicable
- Youtube videos otherwise
- Suggested playlist available on web page and Youtube

4. Announcements

- Picnic July 27: Carburn Park 5pm - picnic theme, please bring mains, salads or dessert (church provides drinks)
- Next meeting at hotel - Aug 10

5. Kids (If there are families with kids in group)

- play video for kids; link found in discussion tools on Knexions web site
- whole group participates in any activities suggested in video (support for families and kids)

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6. Discovery Bible Study (DBS)

1. Overview of Reading Mark 3 and 4

- Chapter 3 - Jesus heals a man with a crippled hand on the Sabbath
- Jesus begins to draw large crowds
- Jesus selects His 12 apostles
- Pharisees accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan
- Jesus family comes to visit Jesus and He teaches about what it means to be part of His family
- Chapter 4 is a series of Jesus teaching using parables including the parable of the sower, the lamp under a basket, the mustard seed and others
- At the end of the chapter Jesus is caught in storm with his disciples on a boat. Jesus had been sleeping and His disciples wake Him fearing they would all drown and Jesus calms the storm
- The focus today is peoples reactions to Jesus. Roughly 3 main categories.
 1. People who follow Jesus either because they saw or experienced miracles or heard His teaching and hoped He might be the Messiah.
 2. People who were confused by Jesus.
 3. Finally those who outright reject Jesus.

2. **Pray** - for minds to be open to know God/Jesus better and to be transformed

3. **Read Mark 3 and 4** — encourage everyone to read along on phone or tablet

- Try and imagine yourself in the story
- Think about what concerns, surprises or amazes you.
- Look for one of the three different reactions
- options
 - have one person read
 - have multiple people read
 - listen to the passage being read in Bible app

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4. Re-tell highlights of the chapter

- For Chapter 3 Put the following sections in order
 - Jesus selects His 12 apostles from among the crowds of followers
 - Jesus heals a man with a crippled hand on the Sabbath making the Pharisees angry
 - Jesus family comes to visit Jesus and He teaches about what it really means to be part of His family
 - Jesus begins to draw large crowds and heals people and casts out demons
 - Pharisees accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan which Jesus easily refutes
- For Chapter 4 answer the following questions
 - Name the 4 types of soil in Jesus parable and the effect they had on the scattered seeds
 - When Jesus refers to quote in scripture as the reason for using parables, what scripture does He quote (hint: see footnotes)?
 - what does the seed represent in this parable?
 - What does Jesus say the key to understanding is?
 - In the parable of the growing seed, what doesn't the farmer understand?
 - What was Jesus doing when the storm hit the boat?
 - What was the disciples reaction to Jesus calming the storm?

5. Context - things that might help understand the reading better

- In chapter 3 when Jesus heals the man with the deformed hand note that Jesus already has enemies that are watching Him closely looking to discredit Him.
- Read Exodus 20:8-11. Does this prohibit healing on the sabbath?
- Over the years many religious scholars and leaders called Rabbi's had interpreted the commandment and gave guidelines on what was work and what wasn't. People were bound to ask.
- What started out as oral tradition (mishnah) which was later written down in Talmud. It included 39 categories of work and hundreds of rules.
- Not only that, Sabbath had become paramount to the Jewish identity. NT Wright in his book 'Mark for Everyone' says that Sabbath and other Jewish laws had become a sign of fierce and exclusive Jewish nationalism.

He goes to say "when religion and nationalism are wedded tightly together,... (it creates a) no-win situation. The whole point of the commandment, "celebrating God's creation and redemption, past, present and future " had been lost sight of. The rule mattered more than the reality."

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- Between the sheer number of rules and them becoming a part of the Jewish national identity, Sabbath had lost its purpose
- Jesus was attracting crowds of thousands. They were hopeful He was the Messiah they were expecting and that He would deliver them from Roman occupation.

The South Asia commentary says "...the ability to attract crowds signals that one has power and prestige. Money and patronage flow to and from the influential and can be used to protect their vested interests. Many a crowd-puller has a hidden agenda. This is true of political leaders, and unfortunately it is even true of some ministers and Christian workers. Jesus, however, would have preferred to withdraw, but the crowds followed him because they know he would recognise their needs and intervene in their lives (3:9-10). As a result people began to cross the boundaries of region, religion, language, ethnicity and culture."

- Large crowds were also dangerous. Rome was always on the lookout for insurrection. Anybody drawing a crowd would soon be on Rome's radar.
- Jesus family seem skeptical of Jesus ministry. For nearly 20 years his brothers and sisters have seen Jesus as a blue collar worker, a carpenter or maybe a stone mason. Then He drops everything and starts a public ministry where he can now heal people and teach to thousands, has 'followers' claiming He is bringing God's Kingdom. It would be difficult to believe.
- Later Jesus brothers would be leaders in the early church movement of Jesus BUT it wasn't until they had seen him crucified and then resurrected that they believed.
- Jesus taught in parables. I'm sure many in the crowd were wondering what He was talking about or maybe even decided on some interpretation of their own. Jesus closest followers didn't understand and asked Jesus to explain it to them. And He did. Regularly.
- Because of the geography near the sea of Galilee there are frequent violent storms on the lake that come up quickly and make traversing the lake difficult at times. This particular storm must have been severe if experienced fishermen were fearing for their lives.

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6. **Share** - what was amazing, concerning or surprising about the reading?

7. Answer questions

1. What does this chapter say about the character of God/Jesus?
2. Consider the three groups of people that formed opinions about Jesus. Which group ended up becoming His most dedicated followers? What happened to the group that followed Jesus and were amazed by His miracles expecting Him to be the Messiah (read Mark 15:9-15)?
3. What is/was your initial reaction to Jesus? Did you form your own conclusions or were you influenced by others? What might you need to reconsider?
4. Based on their reaction to what Jesus did, What do you think the disciples were expecting Jesus to do when they woke Him up from sleeping during the storm?

8. Reflection and Application

- Based on today's reading and discussion, what is one practical step that I can do this week to live this out?

9. Prayer

- Ask people to share needs if comfortable and then take turns praying for needs
- Leader wraps up in prayer for unity in our community and for opportunities to Bless and share with family, friends and neighbours

6. Ending the Meeting

- let the meeting end naturally
 - If the last thing is prayer after the DBS then that is a natural ending point. People may want to continue to talk or switch conversations to something else
 - if the last thing is eating together then let the conversation continue. Be mindful of the host home. Confer with them if the meeting needs to end at a specific time
- remind everyone of the next time we meet