

Gathering@Home Guide: Mar 15, 2026

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

- Pie Potluck on March 22 @ Riverbend Community Centre
- Serving Day, March 29, at the office. We are asking for donations, \$5 per bag, the last chance to donate is at the potluck. Afterwards, we will be having our AGM
- Easter service at the Hotel on April 5th

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 Matthew 18, 19, 20

- *Matthew 18*

- Matthew 18 is the 4th discourse that Matthew records
- The first discourse is the Sermon on the Mount in Chapters 5-7, the second is the mission discourse in Chapter 10, and the third is the Parable discourse in Chapter 13, where he shares seven parables
- Then in Chapter 18 is called the community discourse
- Jesus teaches about humility, saying we must become like children in the Kingdom of Heaven
- He calls his followers to care for the vulnerable
- He shows God's care for the wanderers, which is illustrated by the parable of the lost sheep
- He gives guidance on addressing sin within the community
- He teaches about forgiveness, telling Peter to forgive seventy times seven, and uses the parable of the unforgiving servant to illustrate

- *Matthew 19*

- Jesus responds to the Pharisees' attempt to trap him with a question about divorce
- He welcomes and blesses the children, showing that the kingdom belongs to those who receive it like them
- Jesus encounters the rich young man, challenging him to give up his wealth and follow him.
- This leads to Jesus teaching that wealth can make it difficult to enter the kingdom of God, saying it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, which surprises the disciples.

- *Matthew 20*

- Jesus tells the parable of the workers in the vineyard, teaching about God's generosity and the upside-down nature of the kingdom
- He predicts his death and resurrection for the third time as they travel toward Jerusalem
- The mother of James and John asks for places of honour for her sons in Jesus' kingdom, leading Jesus to teach that true greatness is found in servanthood

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- As they leave Jericho, Jesus heals two blind men who call out to him for mercy
2. **Pray** - for minds to be open to know God/Jesus better and to be transformed
 3. **Read Matthew 15:21-28 (NLT)** - encourage everyone to read along on phone or tablet
 - Try and imagine yourself in the room while this letter is being read.
 - Think about what concerns, surprises or amazes you.
 - options
 - have one person read
 - have multiple people read
 - listen to the passage being read in Bible app
 4. **Re-tell highlights of the chapter**
 - have one person re-tell the chapter summarizing the main points. Have others help them if they can't remember or skip something important
 - OR go from person to person having each person retell the next highlight with group helping them as in previous suggestion
 - alternative answer questions provided
 5. **Context** - things that might help understand the reading better
 - Like A Child
 - Formation happens in different ways. One way people are formed is through the culture and time that they live in. Culture shapes how we think, value status, and understand the world
 - The disciples were also shaped by their culture, which emphasized power, status, and social hierarchy in both Judean and Roman society.
 - Given this cultural background, the disciples' question about who is the greatest in the Kingdom is understandable. They recognize that Jesus is redefining many things, so they want to understand what the new standard is.
 - Jesus responds by pointing to a child as the example of greatness in the Kingdom
 - In the ancient world, children had very low social status. They had few rights and were valued mainly for their future potential
 - NT Wright says he likes to think it was a girl that Jesus used as an example, because it would make the point even stronger, because girls were often considered even more vulnerable and less valued in the surrounding cultures
 - Jesus' example is not about innocence so much as about qualities such as humility, vulnerability, dependence, and openness to learning and receiving care.

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- This teaching reflects the reversal of cultural expectations found throughout Jesus' message, similar to the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, where those of lower status are called blessed
- In the kingdom of God, greatness is not about power and status, but about humility and dependence on God
- This reveals the upside-down nature of the Kingdom; the disciples are in the process of understanding this, but have yet to arrive
- Strong Language used by Jesus
 - Jesus uses strong figurative language here, including the image of a millstone tied around someone's neck (v.6) and the cutting off of body parts (v.8-9)
 - The language is understood as figurative, though some in Christian history have interpreted the references to removing body parts more literally
 - The strong imagery highlights the seriousness of causing others, especially the vulnerable, to stumble
 - The reference to the millstone emphasizes the responsibility that comes when one has some kind of position of influence or power
 - When discussing removing a hand, foot or eye, Jesus is saying that taking this kind of responsibility might cost something
 - Michael J. Wilkins notes that the sin described here refers not to a single failure but to an ongoing pattern or lifestyle
 - If we put this in a cultural context, losing a limb would place someone in a more dependent and vulnerable position in the culture. In the upside-down kingdom, dependence is a good place to be.
- Seated Beside The Throne
 - In Matthew 20, James and John's mother asks Jesus for places of honour for her sons in his kingdom
 - Michael J. Wilkins notes that she likely travelled with the disciples, she was at the crucifixion and may have been one of the women present at the empty tomb
 - The request may be connected to Jesus' earlier statement in Matthew 19:28, where he tells the disciples they will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel
 - Their request may not be based purely on arrogance but also on commitment and loyalty to Jesus. However, it shows they still misunderstood the nature of the kingdom
 - As said before, they are shaped by a social system that values status, power and position
 - Jesus responds by teaching that true greatness is found in servanthood, challenging the cultural understanding of power and authority

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- Within the kingdom of God, status and wealth can become obstacles to true discipleship
- The Values of the kingdom contrast with the surrounding culture:
- The Roman cultural model values power and control
 - The Kingdom of God values service and humility
 - Servants, not rulers, are considered great
 - Jesus becomes the model for Kingdom values
- Understanding and living out these kingdom values is a gradual process. The disciples needed time and grace to be reshaped, and the same is true for followers today

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

7. Answer questions

1. Why might it have been difficult for the disciples to hear that they needed to be like children? What makes it challenging for us to embrace that same kind of humility and dependence?
2. Why do you think Jesus uses strong language in Matthew 18:6-9? What might it look like for us to take his warning seriously in how we live and how we influence others?
3. Why do positions of power often create the temptation to use others for our own benefit? According to Jesus' teaching, how can we remain servants even when we have influence or authority?

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

7. 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