

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting: From Rabbi Hillel

“If I am not for myself, who will be? But, if I am only for myself, what good am I?”

Reflection/Personal Sharing/Prayer (approximately 30 minutes)

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

Focus Reading: From *How Can I Help?* by Ram Dass & Paul Gorman

“Somewhere deep within many of us is a vision of how helping would flow from trust in ourselves and in others. Or perhaps we might recall images of life in a town in which doors didn’t have to be locked, responsibilities were more commonly shared, and going out of your way was hardly out of the ordinary. Or maybe we find ourselves yearning for a future society where the care of others wouldn’t have to be mandated. Service wouldn’t be a duty, it would be a habit—the way of natural compassion.

And yet...

Although at times helping may happen simply in the way of things, all too often helping isn’t happening at all. Even if it is, it can be anything but natural: self-conscious, half-hearted, begrudging. How much are we willing to give, and what are we holding on to? How do we really feel about the place of helping in our lives? We needn’t go deep beneath the surface before we encounter our ambivalence. We note the interplay of generosity and resistance, self-sacrifice and self-protectiveness.” (P. 9)

“ So we face an interesting situation. Our impulses to care for one another often seem instinctive. The more we’re able to act on them freely, the more opportunity we have to feel whole, and be helpful.” (P. 11)

Focus:

Tell us about a time in which someone outside of your family, a person, a community, society, helped you. (Share one of each.)

Share a time you were of some service to someone, group, or cause.

What value does being of service to others play in your life?

What would help you be of more service?

How do you feel about the church doing social service work, social action to change society?

Why should our small group ministry do a service project? (Hint: the definition of the word “ministry” is to be of service.

What should we do as our service project?

Do we want our Small Group Ministry to meet during the summer?

Do you want to continue meeting as this group in the fall, or do you want to join another group, or take in new members to this group?

Do you have any suggestions for our guidelines?

Checkout/Likes and Wishes

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice: From Edward Everett Hale

“I am only one
But still I am one.
I cannot do everything,
But still I can do something.
And because I cannot do everything
I will not refuse to do the something I can do.”