

# SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



PRINCE  
OF PEACE  
Called to Connect



## Justice

June 21, 2020

Mr. Rogers taught generations of children that life is like a neighborhood, and everyone we encounter is our neighbor. There are challenges and conflicts in the neighborhood, but with grace, gentleness and persistence we can live together well. Racism is a big, scary word and the thought of engaging in the battle against it can be even bigger and scarier. But what if we saw marginalized people of color as our neighbor?

## SCRIPTURE TEXT: MATTHEW 5:1-12

Read the scripture text together as a group.

### BACKGROUND INFO

Relationship means responsibility, and throughout Scripture God's people are called to the particular responsibility of caring for the poor, powerless, voiceless and vulnerable. Tony Campolo defines justice as *"love translated into social policy."* Racial inequities in the United States, and Minnesota in particular, are staggering. Graduation rates, policing, home ownership, personal wealth, incarceration rates, to name a few. Justice means more than giving people a handout...though sometimes that is needed. Seeking justice for our neighbor means confronting the systems that favor whites and hinder people of color and removing the barriers. When we see Christ in our neighbor of color we can do nothing less.

Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, had a lot to say about his dream of life for us. In Matthew chapter 5:9 he says this, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Did you catch that? He said that blessed are the peacemakers. Not peacekeepers. He said **peacemakers**. So to simply keep the peace is (at best) to stay quiet about what is really wrong and (at worst) to silence or punish those you disagree with. To MAKE peace requires a holy act of relational creativity that is a gift that we have been given by God as image bearers of God.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does justice mean to you? How has that definition changed after recent events?
- "Love translated into social policy." What do you think about this definition of justice?
- How does this section of Matthew affect you? How does it define what it means to be a Christian?
- How can we lean into seeking restorative justice for our neighbors? What does that look like?

**APPLICATION:** Spend time in prayer asking God to stir up the desire to be a peacemaker. How can you sense God challenging you to take a step towards restorative justice?