

# MAKING ROOM

*Small Group Discussion Guide*  
**JANUARY 7, 2018**



## PREPARATION

### ■ STUDY

Spend the week studying Mark 9:35, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Galatians 5:13–15, Colossians 3:23–24, and 1 Peter 2:16. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

### ■ DETERMINE

Many questions have been included in this guide. Read through this lesson to determine which questions will work best to encourage, push, and grow your group.

### ■ PRAY

As you prepare, pray for the preaching of God's Word this coming weekend. Pray also for your time in this week's study and your group's openness to God's Word.

### ■ LANDING POINT

Being the church means shifting from serving self to serving Christ and others.



## GROUP DISCUSSION

■ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

■ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

■ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

■ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

It happens far too often. There's a chance you've done it, too. What is it? It's seeing the church as a place for you to go and not as a people to be. How often do we think church is about showing up to an event? What if the church is actually much more than this?

God's purpose for the church is to gather and to scatter. The church is God's people, and we gather to worship God, learn from His Word, and serve one another. This happens both in the sanctuary and in the home. But God also calls the church to scatter into the community to bring the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Being the church means shifting from serving self to serving Christ and others.

What does it mean to be the church? How has God called the church to live differently? What does it look like to serve God and His purposes? That's what your group will be discussing this week.

**Q:** *In what ways have you or others misunderstood the church and its purpose?*

**Q:** *Give examples of scattering that you've seen in Pinelake's community?*



## LEARN

*Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.*

## FREE TO SERVE

Paul tells us that “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17). Christ gives us freedom to live for Him and His purposes. No longer are we slaves to sin. In Christ, we are slaves to Him. And God's Spirit lives in us to guide us toward a free and abundant life with God.

In 1 Peter 2:16, the apostle tells his readers not to use their freedom to sin, but to serve. Men and women of the church can choose to live for God's will, not their own. At the heart of God's will for our lives is a life dedicated to service. We all seek the blessed life in one way or another. Jesus tells us the life we're seeking comes through serving: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

Q: *What does it mean to be a slave for Christ?*

Q: *Why does serving bring blessing? In what ways have you found this to be true?*

## SERVANT TO ALL

If our purpose as the church is to serve, whom do we serve? First, we serve the Lord. God gave you life to bring Him glory. That's why Paul tells us that "whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Jesus tells us we are to serve everyone, like He did. "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35). Jesus didn't discriminate about those He served. And the cross is the greatest demonstration of Christ's serving.

Q: *What would be different about your life if you lived out Paul's command to do everything to the glory of God?*

Q: *How did Christ serve us through the cross?*



LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

## SHIFT TO SERVE

What does it look like to make the shift to serve? It begins by recognizing that service is in your job description as a child of God. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and give His life for us. We are called to walk as Jesus walked, and He walked the servant's path. This path is not the easy path. It's often difficult and requires more of you than the selfish path. But it's a path to blessing and the life you were truly meant to live.

Q: *What might be keeping you back from making the shift to serve?*

Q: *What are the differences between the servant's path and the selfish path?*

## THE DANGER ZONE

As the church, it's important to understand the blessings in serving. But we should also be aware of some dangers. One danger we should avoid is action without heart. Doing good things for God isn't enough. Our serving should come from the heart, not something we do simply out of duty. Another danger we should avoid is religion without relationship. God is more concerned with His relationship with you than what you can do for Him.

Q: *What can you do to avoid the dangers listed?*

Q: *Respond to the following statement: "God is more concerned with His relationship with you than what you can do for Him."*



### LEAD

*Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.*

## MAKE YOUR MOVE

We all need to shift more toward serving God and His kingdom purposes. If you're ready to shift to serve, then you have to start moving. There are few things you can do. First, move toward time with God. How much of your day is spent with God, either reading His Word or praying? How much time is spent talking to others about Him or thinking about Him in your day-to-day life? If you're spending time with God, He will reveal ways you can serve Him. Maybe God is calling you to serve in a ministry or lead a group in the church. Second, move toward love. How much room is there in your heart for others? What are some ways you can give more of your heart to their needs? Maybe it's volunteering. Or perhaps it's reaching out to your co-worker who doesn't yet know Jesus as Savior. Third, move toward action. Good ideas aren't worth much until they're put into action. So, what are you going to do? What will it take for you to roll up your sleeves, get to work, and sweat a little for the kingdom?

**Q:** *What's one thing you can do to make a move to serve right now?*

**Q:** *Make a list of things your group can do in the coming months to serve each other and your community?*



## PRAY

Praise God that He chose you to be part of His plan. Ask Him to search your heart and expose areas that haven't been fully given to serving Him. Ask Him to reveal ways you can serve others in your church and community.



## FOLLOW UP

Midway through this week, send a follow-up email to your group with some or all of the following:

- Read Romans 12:3–8 and reflect on how your gifts can be used to serve others.
- Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their lives.

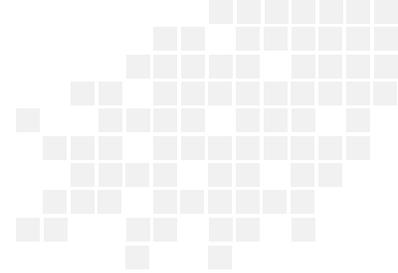
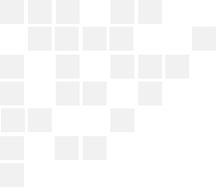


## COMMENTARY

**HOW TO LIVE FREELY** Peter follows his statement on using your freedom to serve with practical commands on how to do it. “Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor” (1 Peter 2:17). Each of these commands has practical implications for our lives today.

**IT'S ALL ABOUT HIM** Paul Tripp contrasts a life lived for self and a life lived for God's glory this way: “We were not made to live independent, self-directed lives. We were not meant to exist according to our own little self-oriented plans, living for our own moments of glory. No, we were created to live for Him. [...] Even the most regular, seemingly unimportant tasks of my life must be shaped and directed by a heartfelt desire for the glory of God.”

**SERVING AND SUFFERING** Serving God doesn't guarantee that you'll live a carefree or easy life. Often when we serve we experience the opposite. So, how does Paul understand suffering in his serving? By showing us that everything we might lose in this life in serving God cannot compare with the joy of gaining Christ (Philippians 3:4–11).



**ENDNOTES:**

1. Paul David Tripp, *New Morning Mercies: A Daily Gospel Devotional* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 3.

