



MAKING ROOM

SMALL GROUP TEACHING GUIDE
MARCH 19, 2017

PINELAKE CHURCH

CURRENT SERIES | *MAKING ROOM*



WEEK 1



THIS SERIES

During this series we will be walking through four fantastic conversations about what it means for us to make room in our hearts for God's plan and purposes individually, as a group and as a church family. Here are a few elements to enhance your group experience and conversation:



VIDEOS

Week 1 or 2 (March 19 or 26): Watch Chip's video as a group.

Week 3 (April 2): Hear from your Campus Pastor.

RETURN: *Come back to this section each week and answer these 3 questions:*

- + *Individually, what does it mean for me to make room for God's vision in my life?*
- + *As a group, what does it mean for us to make room for God's vision in our group?*
- + *As a church, what does it mean for us to make room for God's vision as a church?*



PREPARATION

+ **DETERMINE** | Evaluate and determine which discussion points and study questions will work best for your group.

+ **PRAY** | Dedicate time to pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members and their openness to God's Word.

+ **LANDING POINT** | Making room in your vision helps you see your ability to influence others for God's kingdom.



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.

This new series is about making room in our vision, hearts and finances for how God wants to expand His kingdom and bring about life-change across the state of Mississippi. This week your group will discuss how making room in your vision helps you see your ability to influence others for God's kingdom. God has called everyone at Pinelake to play a special role in His kingdom building project. This is the highest calling imaginable. And when you obey this call, you allow God's kingdom to grow in and through you in unimaginable ways.

- + *What does it mean to make room for something or someone in your life?
What do you need to do or change to make it possible?*
- + *What words come to mind when you hear the term 'kingdom of God'?*



LEARN

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

| GOD'S PROMISE

The previous weeks had been a rollercoaster ride for Jesus' disciples. They watched their Lord go from being a hero to being crucified. But three days after his death and burial, Jesus was raised from the dead. He appeared before His disciples and stayed with them for forty days, teaching them about the kingdom of God. The disciples had witnessed the most significant event in history, and, yet, Jesus told them the story was far from being finished. God wanted to do more.

Jesus instructed His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Before His death, Jesus told His disciples about God's promise to give them the Holy Spirit. "What does this all mean?" they wondered. "What's going to happen next?"

+ Read Acts 1:1-8 as a group. Imagine being a character in the story. What emotions would you feel seeing and listening to Jesus?

+ Recall a time when you wondered about your future. How did God help you move forward, make a decision, etc.?

| GOD'S POWER

The disciples took their questions to Jesus and asked whether He was going to restore the Kingdom of Israel. They had visions of Jesus overthrowing Rome and establishing a military and political kingdom on earth. But Jesus gives them a different vision of God's kingdom. He told them they would receive power from the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and all the earth. God's kingdom would be different than others. This kingdom wouldn't grow through military conquest. It would grow through His witnesses (the Church) spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

+ How would you describe the differences between the kingdoms of this world and God's kingdom?

+ Why do you think Jesus chose to use the term 'witness' to describe what His disciples would be for Him?



LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

| A VISION AND A MISSION

Jesus gave His disciples a vision and a mission. The vision was to see God's kingdom reign in individuals, families, communities, cities and entire nations. In time, God's promise that the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of His glory (Hab. 2:14) will be fulfilled. The mission was to join God in making Jesus' kingdom vision a reality by being His witness to others.

God changed the world through those disciples. But their impact came as a result of them making room in their vision for what God wanted to do in and through them. The same is true for us today. God continues to change the world through His Church, and calls us to make room in our hearts to live out God's vision and not our vision.

- + Why is a common vision and mission necessary for a healthy, growing church?*
- + What might keep you from making room in your vision for God?*

| CONNECTING TRUTH TO LIFE

Jesus always connected truth to life in His teaching. What He taught could be lived out. So, what does this story in Acts teach us about practically making room in our vision for God? Let's look at three things God gives believers and how they affect our lives.

First, God gives you a kingdom outlook. The vision and mission Jesus gave His disciples gave them a new outlook on life. No longer were they to live for themselves; they were to live for God's kingdom. As part of His Church, you play a significant role in God's kingdom story. Second, God gives you effective power. The disciples would have been unable to fulfill Jesus' call on their own strength. They needed help, which is why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit. God's call requires God's strength. God's Spirit dwells in you, enabling you to live for God and His purposes. Third, God gives you a new assignment. The disciples were called to be Jesus' witnesses. Their lives served as proof that God's kingdom had arrived and Jesus was its king. The same is true for believers today. God uses our lives to reveal the truth of His Gospel to others.

+ *What does it mean to you that God gives you a significant role in His kingdom story?*

+ *What would happen if your group lived out these truths? What would be different about your group?*



LEAD

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

| GOD'S VISION FOR PINELAKE

You are part of a movement of God that began in 1971. Our church began with a commitment to teach the Bible and reach our communities with the good news of the Gospel. Behind that commitment was a desire to be a community of love and healing for the broken. As our church grew, God called us to make more room in our vision for what He wanted to do through us. What started as a ministry to one community, has now expanded to include multiple campuses in Madison, Clinton, Starkville and Oxford. But that's not the end of the story. God continues to work and give us even more opportunities to have influence throughout Mississippi for His kingdom. We're excited about the next chapter in our story and what God will do.

+ *In what ways have you been a part of Pinelake's story? What difference has that made in your life?*

+ *What's one way you can seize an opportunity this week to demonstrate or share the hope of Jesus with friends, community or workplace?*



PRAY

Pray that you would make room in your vision for what God wants to do in and through you (and your group). Acknowledge and praise God for His past faithfulness to Pinelake's community. Ask for bold faith and a God-sized vision moving forward.



FOLLOW UP

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

- **Read Matthew 13:1-52 and reflect on how Jesus describes the kingdom of God.**
- **Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their life.**



COMMENTARY

+ What exactly is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is the concept of God's eternal sovereign reign and authority over creation and people. "For the ancient Israelites [in the Old Testament], the kingdom [God] was real. It was experienced tangibly in their lives. This real and present nature of God's kingdom was true in part because Israelite kings were the extension of God's heavenly rule."¹ However, Old Testament prophecies anticipated a superior kingdom of God to come in the future. Jesus revealed that this superior kingdom of God had arrived with His coming (Mark 1:15). The central message of Jesus' teaching was about living for God's kingdom. He often did this through various parables describing the kingdom (e.g., Matt. 13:1-52). Revelation looks forward to the kingdom of God overthrowing the kingdoms of the world and Christ reigning as King of kings for all eternity (Rev. 11:15).

+ Witnessing in Acts. Jesus' call to His disciples in Acts 1:8 actually gives the reader an outline of what's to come in the rest of the book. Here's how Acts is divided: (1) witness in Jerusalem (chs. 1-7), (2) witness in Judea and Samaria (chs. 8-12) and (3) witness to the ends of the earth (chs. 13-28). Like concentric circles, the disciples' influence and reach expands as the story of Acts unfolds.

+ The kingdom of self vs. the kingdom of God. Paul Tripp contrasts two different kingdoms we will live for, the kingdom of self or the kingdom of God. The kingdom of self is "a life driven by self-indulgent desire. It's a life that runs on the track of my wants, my needs, and my feelings."² However, by God's grace, we can live for a better, more satisfying kingdom – the kingdom of God. Tripp reflects on the inner tension between these kingdoms: "*What kingdom rules your words? Whose kingdom do you speak in service of – the claustrophobic kingdom of self or the big-sky country of the glorious, love-infused kingdom of God? The answer for most of us is probably both. Sometimes I get it right – sometimes I do find joy in the kingdom of God – and sometimes I get it very wrong. For the war between these two kingdoms that rages on the turf of my heart, I need the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.*"³

1. David Seal, "Kingdom of God," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

2. Paul Tripp, "War of Words: Getting to the Heart for God's Sake" [sermon, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN, September 27, 2008], accessed March 8, 2017, <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/war-of-words-getting-to-the-heart-for-gods-sake>.

3. *Ibid.*