



# MAKING ROOM

SMALL GROUP TEACHING GUIDE  
APRIL 9, 2017



## 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

- + **STUDY** | John 12:12-19. Use the commentary to enhance 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** | Commitment to God is making room in your plans for His purposes by obeying Him and taking action.



## 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.*

Last week your group discussed how to make room in your finances by seeing every good thing you have as coming from God. His gifts are meant to bless others and expand His kingdom. This week we finish the Making Room series by looking at commitment and what it means to make room in your plans for God's purposes. God has a plan, and He calls us to obey and take action. In the end, it's really that simple.

*+ What's the most important thing God has been teaching you through this series?*

*+ Define commitment in your own words. What words best describe it?*



## LEARN

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

# | THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Thousands upon thousands of Israelites would take the pilgrimage to Jerusalem every year for Passover. It's estimated that between 100,000 and 2.7 million people attended this event. Imagine busy streets, overbooked inns and the sounds of the chattering in nearly every corner of Jerusalem. This was the stage for Jesus' triumphal entry.

Only recently had Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. And there were people in Jerusalem who witnessed this miracle. Word was spreading about Jesus and who He was. Some wondered, "Could this be the Savior we've been waiting for?" Others asked, "What kind of man can raise the dead?"

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it as He entered Jerusalem. The crowd was ecstatic; the energy in the air was electric. They cried out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" They even laid down palm branches before Him to honor Him.

*+ Read John 12:12-19. What stands out to you in this story? Why?*

*+ Divide the group in pairs. Take turns retelling the story in your own words.*

## | HOW TO GIVE

The crowd thought liberation had come to Israel, but the disciples were confused. They didn't understand what was happening. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were irate. "This is unacceptable. He's leading the people astray. He's an imposter. This has to stop!"

*+ Why were the disciples were confused? Why were the Pharisees upset?*

*+ Have you ever misunderstood a situation or someone's motives? What did you learn from this experience?*



LIVE

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

## | TAKING ACTION

What do we learn from this story about commitment? First, we see that Jesus was following through with God's plans. He was determined to go to Jerusalem, which was the place where He would be arrested and crucified. Jesus heard God's call and took action. It seems simple, doesn't it? God calls and we should be obedient to it. But we don't always respond that way. We make excuses. We doubt God. We doubt ourselves. But the truth is, obeying God is our best option. God calls us to lay down our lives (and our plans) for Him. When we do that, He works through us in powerful ways.

+ *What keeps you from obeying God's call at times?*

+ *Where do you see God calling you to take action in your life?*

## | NO MATTER WHAT

Second, Jesus knew He would suffer and die. But that didn't stop Him from obeying God. Commitment to God's plan motivated Jesus to take each step closer to the cross. Jesus knew what the crowd expected from Him. They wanted someone to liberate them from Rome. They wanted a seasoned general who would overthrow the Romans and return Israel to her former glory. Jesus had other expectations. He liberated God's people, but He liberated them from a greater enemy – Satan, sin and death.

Often, people put expectations on us. And it's easy to be influenced by those expectations, isn't it? Jesus shows us that we need to do what God says, despite what others may say, think or do. Jesus' relationship with the Father motivated His obedience, and that is where our motivation comes from as well.

+ *What does it mean that "Jesus' relationship with the Father motivated His obedience"? Explain.*

## | AFTER THE FACT

Third, the disciples didn't understand what Jesus was doing. They only understood His actions after the fact. How many times has that happened to you? Maybe you had to make an important decision at work or had a crucial conversation

In the moment, it's often hard to see what God is up to. However, we often don't see how God is working in a situation or conversation, until afterwards.

*+ How have you learned to navigate confusing situations, relationships and decisions?*



## LEAD

Select 2-3 questions from this section to answer.

## | A PEOPLE OF VISION

One of the reasons for this series is to rally the Pinelake family around a common vision – to see God glorified and His kingdom advance in communities throughout Mississippi. God is at work in these communities, and He's calling us to join Him in His work. The Bible says that, without vision, people will perish. In other words, we need a common vision in order to move forward.

*+ Where do you see yourself in Pinelake's vision?*

## | A PEOPLE OF COMMITMENT

Good vision requires commitment. What does that mean? It means to do everything in your power and influence to make this vision a reality. Pray and consider your role in our vision. How might God use you, your time and your resources to bring others into the kingdom? What if you dedicated yourself to getting to know your co-workers better and sharing the good news of the Gospel with them? What if you saw your time at university as a once-in-a-lifetime chance to reach your classmates for Christ?

*+ How can you commit to make room for God's plans in your life this week?*



## PRAY

Spend time focusing your prayer on: 1) adoration (praising God for who He is and what He has done), 2) confession (how you have failed to commit your life to Him and His purposes) and 3) commitment (asking God to show you where He is working and how you can join His work).



## FOLLOW UP

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

- Read Hebrews 12:1-2 and reflect on how this passage relates to Jesus' commitment.
- Ask the group to share any stories or lessons learned where they see God at work in their life.



## COMMENTARY

**JOHN'S LITERARY STYLE.** Features of John's Gospel include: 1) misunderstood statements or actions of Jesus, 2) events that happen in threes or sevens, and 3) stark contrasts between things like life and death, light and darkness and the fleeting and the eternal. Another feature is how people respond to Jesus. In this story, we how the crowd, the disciples and Pharisees misunderstood and responded to Jesus' actions.<sup>1</sup>

**PASSOVER.** Passover was the most important Jewish feast, which celebrated Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. "[According to Exodus 12], a lamb is to be slain in each household and its blood sprinkled on the lintel and doorposts of the house in memory of the fact that when the first-born in Egypt were slain, the Lord 'passed over' the houses which were so marked."<sup>2</sup> The significance of this imagery cannot be overstated. Jesus was the Lamb of God, who was the sacrifice for the sin of the world. Because of Him, God's wrath passed over us and on to Him.

**'HOSANNA.'** The term is understood as a prayer, which means "save, we pray." The crowd was calling out for Jesus to save them. "The greeting is followed by a declaration of blessedness on the one who comes in the name of the Lord. That the people understood "Hosanna" in a messianic sense follows from their adding to the psalm [i.e., Ps. 118:25–26] itself the words "blessed is the King of Israel." This one who comes in the name of the Lord—i.e., with the authority of Yahweh—is Israel's king, the long-awaited Messiah."<sup>3</sup>

1. Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2016–2017.

2. F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1237.

3. Robert H. Mounce, "John," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke–Acts* (Revised Edition), ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 532.