



SERMON STUDY GUIDE
For the sermon preached on
11/01/2020:
“How to Vote in 2020”
Matthew 10:16/
Luke 10:25-27

How to use the Study Guide During Virtual Online Group Meetings

Group life is even more critical during this incredible season. Over and over, group leaders are reporting that suddenly there is a new hunger to connect, share, pray, and meditate on Scripture together, and so we are making these guides available weekly and suggesting a new format during this season.

As you know, our Group Life’s vision is to “practice the way of Jesus.” And while Jesus never had to lead a Torah study over Zoom, he was strategic in his teaching ministry, and we want to be as well.

There are a number of differences between meeting in person and meeting online, ranging from the obvious to the subtle. One is, given our attention spans for online meetings, we want to encourage you to limit the length of your call between 45-60 minutes and we are calling this “Check-In Plus One.” Meaning, spend a few minutes checking in with your group and see if there are any new needs with them (or even amongst their neighbors). The “One” is to spend time in study. As our virtual season continues, our desire for meaningful content and interaction will grow. Given our new format, the study guides based on Sunday’s Sermon will be designed to be more application based (as opposed to unpacking the text with the Inductive Bible Study method). You might consider sharing the passage beforehand with your group in hopes that they might spend more time with the Scripture before the gathering.

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do in practicing the way of Jesus in community.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Tim Ghali and Pastor Rachel Keeler on behalf of the Group Life Team

For the Leader: “Check-In Plus One”

Welcome everyone to the Zoom call and outline the goal of this call being 45 minutes. Spend 15-20 minutes checking in with one another, then move into a time of prayer, and then spend some time discussing the application of the Scripture passage.

A “Check-in” question might be, “How are you doing, and is there anything new that has arisen in your life or in your neighborhood that we can pray about?”

This week, Pastor Bryan is leading us in the second installment of a mini-series on faith and politics we're calling "Serpents and Doves" (the first sermon, "Citizens of the Kingdom," came as a sort of break in the "Disrupted" series a few weeks ago, on Oct. 4th). This sermon is titled "How to Vote in 2020"; the texts are Matthew 10:16 and Luke 10:25-27.

Depending on when your group meets, and how the vote-counting goes, your group may meet before the polls even close, after the results are announced, or somewhere in between. Either way, we encourage you to prepare for this week's discussion in an especially prayerful way.

Matthew 10:16

"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

Luke 10:25-27

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

27 He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Q – At the very beginning of the sermon, Pastor Bryan shared a meme that says, "I'm going to save a ton of money this Christmas by bringing up politics at Thanksgiving dinner." He noted that many of us are terrified of those political conversations, because the potential for division is so great and because they've gone badly so many times. Later on in the message, Bryan said that one part of engaging in politics from a biblical perspective is that we don't assume that everyone in our small group shares our political views.

- Given these two observations—that many of us are afraid of entering into political conversations, and that here in this group, we may well have a range of political views—how are you personally feeling about discussing a sermon titled "How to Vote in 2020" with our group?
- Do you think it is important for a church community to grapple together with political questions? Why or why not?

Q – Pastor Bryan spoke about *voting like a serpent*: being thoughtful, deliberate, and strategic in how we vote; being engaged citizens, attentive to what's happening around us, discerning about what we see and hear and read. He also challenged us to *speak like a dove*: speaking in a way that invites conversation, rather than shutting it down; asking people their opinions, rather than leading with our own; speaking for ourselves, not for "all Christians."

- Which of these two challenges—voting like a serpent or speaking like a dove—is harder for you at this stage in life? Why do you think that is? How might God be calling you to grow here?

Q – At the end of the sermon, Pastor Bryan said: “For followers of Jesus, our political engagement, our speaking and voting, has to be *guided*, and *governed*, by *love*.” Reflecting on the story of the Good Samaritan, who acted in love toward someone he didn’t even know, someone from a different people group, someone who would have disagreed with him politically and theologically, he challenged us to think about how we can love our neighbors through the political process.

- What is one thing we can do as a church community to build bridges between people of different political views?
- What is one thing you personally can do to build those kinds of bridges?

Close by praying together for our deeply divided nation, and that the church might be a model of true community, as we act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with the Lord.