



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides! If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE

for the sermon preached on November 14, 2021

“Peace and Prosperity for Our Neighbors Near and Far”—Jeremiah 29:7



This year, Global Awareness Week is focusing on the interconnectedness between local and global communities. Every day, we work and sacrifice for our families and loved ones. We want to provide them with love, with a future, and with hope. Similarly, in our extended community, in the family of God near and far, our sisters and brothers also yearn for safety, peace, and the opportunity to earn a living, send their kids to school, and live out their dreams with friends and family. During GAW 2021, we're looking at how we can seek the “Peace and Prosperity of Our Neighbors Near and Far.” In the sermon, James Misner, World Relief’s Senior VP of Strategic Engagement, unpacks the meaning of Jeremiah 29:7 to help us better understand what it means to seek the peace and prosperity of our neighbors near and far.

Group Discussion Questions

Q – Have you ever had to live, or spend a significant amount of time, somewhere you didn't want to be? How did you feel during the time that you had to be there? How did you respond to your circumstances?

Q – Jeremiah 29:11-13 (“For I know the plans I have for you...”) is a well-known and treasured passage, in which God promises to bring the Israelites out of exile, to “give [them] hope and a future.” Our theme verse for GAW this year is found just a few verses earlier, in a passage in which God gives the Israelites instructions on how they are to live while they are *in* exile.

- [Invite someone to read Jeremiah 29:4-7 out loud.]
- What do we know about the context of this passage?

- How does God want the Israelites to respond to their circumstances? What, specifically, does God tell the Israelites to do while they are in Babylon?
- In what ways would fulfilling these commands have been difficult for the Israelites? In what ways would they benefit from fulfilling these commands? Why do you think God asks them to do these things?

Q – James talked about how God calls people in exile to be present to their circumstances, seeking peace and prosperity for the place where they are in exile, which means a certain degree of acceptance and surrender to the situation, even while they work and hope for something new.

- What did you find surprising about this way of seeing exile? What stood out to you?

Q – In the interview that Pastor Richard and Sharon conducted with Paul Malkemes and Christian Grant, what stood out to you about how the Boston Project seeks the peace and prosperity of their Dorchester neighborhood?

- What is your immediate neighborhood? What is one concrete way that you can work for the peace and prosperity of the particular neighborhood in which God has placed you?

Q – In the interview that James Misner conducted with Matilda Matitha, James said that God’s command to seek peace and prosperity assumes that there is chaos and darkness in communities, and asked Matilda about how the churches she works with are responding to that chaos and darkness in their local situation.

- What stood out to you about how the church in Malawi seeks the peace and prosperity of their neighbors?
- What are some aspects of the chaos and darkness in our own local communities? How can we as a church respond to that chaos and darkness?

Q – Has anyone in the group participated in any of the events of Global Awareness Week this year, and if so, would you tell us a little bit about what you experienced? [Or: Does anyone plan to attend any of the events of Global Awareness Week? Which ones?]

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don’t feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
 - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
 - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.

- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

Group Leader Support: Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team.