

LIFEGROUP NOTES: MATTHEW 5:1-16

As ever, please use (or discard!) these ideas as is most suitable for your group. Don't feel you have to use everything.

Preparing for God's Word

1. Jesus is about to speak to His disciples in the hearing of a much bigger crowd (5:1-2). He is going to tell them immediately that following Him will make them stand out from the wider society. Christians are bound to be different! How do you feel about that? Are you prepared to stand out?

Read Mt 5:1-16

2. See vv.3-10. Eight wonderful promises beginning "Blessed are ..."! How might your non-Christian friends react if they heard Jesus' words? Why? What's your own reaction? Why?
3. How can these Kingdom "norms" be nurtured in our daily lives?
4. See vv.13-16. Jesus indicates that when we live the life of vv.3-10, we'll be as distinctive as salt, light, and a city set on a hill. And we'll be noticed! And yet ... are there ways in which you routinely put the light of the gospel under a bowl (v.15)? Why do you do this? How can we help one another to lift the light high rather than hide it?
5. How might growing in the characteristics described in vv.3-9 lead to suffering for our faithfulness to Jesus (vv.10-12)? Describe a time when you have faced opposition for your Christian faith. How did you react? What does Jesus promise when we suffer for our faith in Him?
6. How might living the life of vv.3-10 lead to praise to God (v.16)? Share some ways in which you've seen this happen, either through the witness of individual Christians or through groups of them shining together.
7. *No comment could be more hurtful to the Christian than the words, "But you are no different from anybody else" (John Stott).* Reflect on this. If someone might reasonably say this about us, what should we do? How does the grace of Jesus in the gospel grow us into people who shine brightly for Him in a dark world?

• Responding in Prayer

Bring your own life, and the life of the group, to God. Ask Him to grow you in Jesus, so that the fruit of your life in Him becomes obvious to others.

Eddie Larkman, January 2017