

# DISCUSSION GUIDE: JOINING JESUS ON HIS MISSION

*“Lord, take me where you want me to go;  
Let me meet who you want me to meet;  
Tell me what you want me to say;  
And keep me out of your way. Amen.”*

—The daily prayer of Father Mychal Judge, NYFD chaplain,  
killed in the 9/11 attacks at the World Trade Center

## SESSION 1: JESUS IS ON A MISSION (CHAPTERS 1-2)

*Jesus is on a mission.*

He has been sent by his Father on a grand adventure to redeem and restore human lives to his kingdom. Jesus is already on the loose out there in our neighborhoods, workplaces and schools. He is already doing the heavy lifting of working in the lives of every human being we see.

*And he invites us to join him.* “Come, follow me” (Mark 1:17).

Definitions: What we mean

- “*Missional Living*” is joining Jesus on his redemptive mission and living each day as if it were a mission trip into our own community. We are Neighborhood Missionaries.

- “*Missional Community*” is a smaller group of local neighborhood missionaries who gather regularly in order to support each other as we learn to join Jesus on his mission.
  - “*Neighborhood*” is any network of people to which we have regular access. Who is regularly within our reach? Who are the people who live near us, work near us, play near us, etc.?
  - “*Neighboring*” is any interaction that helps foster friendship between neighbors. Neighboring puts us into position to find out what Jesus is already up to in the lives of people near us.
1. The premise of the book is that Jesus is already on the loose in our community doing the heavy lifting of pursuing his Father’s mission in people’s lives. All we have to do is join him. What intrigues you about thinking of mission and outreach in this way?
  2. What was one “aha” moment you had as you read the first chapters?
  3. How has Jesus been messing with you lately? What is he inviting you to notice, believe or wrestle with?
  4. What did you learn about being an everyday missionary?
  5. About which definition(s) do you still have questions?
  6. What is Jesus inviting you to do as a result of today’s discussion?

## SESSION 2: MISSION MINDSET CHANGES (CHAPTERS 2-6)

*Jesus is inviting me to join him on his mission.*

This is an important mindset change for most U.S. church members. Jesus does not give me a mission to do *for* him. Jesus is on a mission and he invites me to come *with* him. I'm not a Jesus-*salesperson*. I'm a Jesus-*follower*.

*The U.S. has become one of the largest mission fields on the planet. The river has moved.* The odds are very good that right now, wherever you live in the U.S., the people in your neighborhood and workplace are largely unconnected to a local congregation and may not be connected to Jesus at all. We are no longer a church who is servicing a community filled with a variety of Christians. We are now a church who finds itself needing to be on mission in a mission field.

*As Neighborhood Missionaries, we have a simple mindset:*

In order to join Jesus on his mission all we really have to do is enjoy people and then seek, recognize and respond to what Jesus is already doing in the lives of the people we are enjoying.

1. Explain the difference between being a Jesus-salesperson and a Jesus-follower. What difference does this mindset change make for you?
2. What makes sense to you about the metaphor of the river moving?
3. What challenges do you (and your congregation) face now that the river has moved?
4. What gives you hope in spite of these challenges?
5. What surprised you about Jesus' secret missional weapon?

What do you think could keep you from imitating his strategy?  
How can Jesus help you overcome this?

6. What is Jesus inviting you to do as a result of today's discussion?

### SESSION 3: SEEKING WHAT'S ALREADY HAPPENING (CHAPTERS 7-10)

*How do we seek, recognize and respond* to what Jesus is already doing in the lives of the people we are enjoying? We start by paying attention to what he is already showing us. He says, "Open your eyes and look," for a reason.

*We can summarize the theology at work this way:*

- *The kingdom of God* (that is, the redemptive presence and activity of God in human lives) has come into the world to work out *the mission of God* (the redeeming and restoring of human lives to the kingdom of God) through *the people of God* (the redemptive presence and activity of God made tangible to other human beings).
1. What intrigues you about seeking what Jesus is already showing you?
  2. What were some "aha" breakthroughs for you as you read the chapters on the kingdom of God?
  3. Have you started to intentionally seek the kingdom of God in everyday life? How would you describe what you are looking for?
  4. The kingdom comes to people from Jesus through us. How does this change the value you place in showing a little love, joy, truth or patience to the people around you? Tell the story

of an opportunity you had to do this in the last week.

5. What scares you about being an everyday missionary? What did you like about the analogy of the GPS and God's ability to recalculate when we blow an opportunity?
6. What is Jesus inviting you to do as a result of today's discussion?

*"Can Jesus use imperfect missionaries?"*

*"That's all he ever does!"*

#### SESSION 4: THE 5 MISSION PRACTICES (CHAPTERS 11-16)

*As Neighborhood Missionaries, we have 5 simple mission practices we put into play as part of everyday life. The practices position us to enjoy people and seek, recognize and respond to what Jesus is already doing in the lives of the people we are enjoying:*

1. **Seeking the kingdom:** The kingdom of God is the redemptive presence and activity of God on the move in the world around us. God asks us to seek it so we can find it. What are we looking for? We are looking for where God is showing us that grace can be applied. We are looking for where a little love and truth would make a difference. It often looks like human need.
2. **Hearing from Jesus:** Allow Jesus to continue discipling us and guiding us into his mission by opening one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) and joining the crowd following Jesus around. Listen to what he actually said. Watch what he actually did. Ask yourself, "What if Jesus means this? How does he want me to respond?" Hint: it usually begins with "humbling myself."

3. **Talking with People:** God can do more with two people talking with each other than he can with two people successfully ignoring each other. Talking with people means we do more listening than talking. We can do this randomly with strangers or regularly with people who live, work and play near us. This practice is for introverts and extroverts, honoring the relational pace with which God has wired us. Ask for the person's name, find out where they come from, and invite them to tell their story. Listen for what they are ready for. Take it one conversation at a time.
4. **Doing Good:** We are Jesus with skin on. When we find out what someone is ready for, we step in and help. What good can we do that will make Jesus' intangible love and goodness tangible to people around us? Remember, Jesus says he does his best work through the small things we do. Think "seed," "pinch of yeast" or "cool cup of water."
5. **Ministering through Prayer:** When trust has had time to build, people will start sharing what's really going on in their lives. When a person shares something real and hard, we can respond to them with a simple offer of grace: "Would you like me to pray with you about that?"

We put the 5 Practices into play every day as part of our missionary lifestyle. You just never know what Jesus may be up to!

Discussion: Go through each of the 5 Practices in turn and tell your stories of what you are learning as you begin putting them into play in everyday life (or share what you are struggling with).

Discussion: What is Jesus inviting you to do as a result of today's discussion?

*“Starting is what stops most people.”*

## SESSION 5: A MISSION TRIP TO OUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD (CHAPTERS 17-18)

*Being a Neighborhood Missionary begins with getting to know and starting to enjoy our neighbors.* There are three simple missionary questions we can begin to answer:

1. Who are these people?
2. What is Jesus already up to in their lives?
3. How can I join him?

The best way to get to know and start to enjoy neighbors is to create a Neighboring Environment. In other words, we create an opportunity for neighbors to come together, hang out and allow conversation to emerge and, over time, friendship to blossom.

You can follow this simple Neighboring Formula:

Unhurried Time
+ Proximity
+ Activity (usually involving food)
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Conversation
x Over Time
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FRIENDSHIP

Several examples of both intentional and spontaneous neighboring are provided in chapter eighteen. Take a moment to review those. Which ones stood out as a good fit for you?

Have you filled out your Neighborhood Prayer Map (Appendix 2)?

Now you are ready to plan your first Neighboring Event. With one Neighboring Event, you can progress from *wanting* to be a missionary in your neighborhood to having *launched*. Take a few moments to fill in your plan below and then share it with your fellow neighborhood missionaries:

1. Pray daily using your Neighborhood Prayer Map
2. Choose one of the neighboring ideas from chapter eighteen (or choose one of your own making): My Neighboring Event will be \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who else might enjoy helping me?
4. Who will we invite?
5. What will be the date for the event? When will we have invitations out?

Event date: \_\_\_\_\_

Invite delivery date: \_\_\_\_\_

## SESSION 6: MISSIONAL COMMUNITY (CHAPTER 19)

*Neighborhood Missionaries need a little help from our friends.*

The key to joining Jesus on his mission every day is putting the 5 Practices into play. The key to staying intentional and inspired for this missional lifestyle is the missional community. Those in the missional community help each other stay on the Jesus-adventure with



encouragement, insights and accountability. The easiest thing for a Neighborhood Missionary to do is give up. It's easy to get busy and distracted or frustrated and discouraged. However, with a little help from our friends we can remain patient, press through these times and continue the mission with Jesus.

The way those in the missional community help each other with encouragement, insights and accountability is with the 5 Questions. *The 5 Questions are simply questions which correspond to the 5 Practices.* When we gather in our missional community, the 5 Questions give each person the opportunity to tell their stories of what happened as they put the 5 Practices into play along life's way.

The 5 Practices with their corresponding 5 Questions are the following:

1. Seeking the kingdom: How did you see God at work this week?
2. Hearing from Jesus: What has Jesus been teaching you in his Word?
3. Talking with People: What kind of conversations are you having with pre-Christians? (By "pre-Christians" we mean to err on the side of hope!)
4. Doing Good: What good can we do around here?
5. Ministering through Prayer: How can we help you in prayer?

When missionary friends gather in your home or at a coffeehouse or pub, take time to relax and reconnect, and then sit in a circle and start hearing and telling your mission-stories. The key to people staying intentional and inspired for long-term missional living is the hearing and telling of our stories. The 5 Questions simply give us the launch pad for doing that. *Telling our Kingdom-stories reinforces our Kingdom-*

*values which reinforces our Kingdom-practices, which produces more Kingdom-stories.*

Starting a missional community is as simple as gathering a few interested friends and using the 5 Questions.

Discussion: Each person choose one of the 5 Questions, and tell your Kingdom-story!

Discussion: What happened as your group heard and told their stories?

Discussion: What is Jesus inviting you to do as a result of today's discussion?

## SESSION 7: FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Joining Jesus' mission is not so much about changing the whole church as it is about changing our own mindset and practices and inviting a few friends to come with us.* Think of a "pinch of yeast" as it gradually spreads through "the loaf" of our congregation. We don't try to convince the whole congregation to be "missional," all at once. We start with the few who are ready and willing to come along with us and put the mindset and practices of a Neighborhood Missionary into play as part of our everyday lives. Joining Jesus' mission is not about changing what we do when we go to church on Sunday mornings. It is about changing what we do when we go out as Church into our neighborhoods, workplaces and schools on Monday mornings.

1. What makes sense about the above paragraph?
2. Why focus on changing your own mindset and practices before trying to change anyone else's?

3. What do you most need God to change in you to become an everyday missionary?
4. How would you explain what an everyday missionary is to someone who has not read this book?
5. How would you explain what a missional community is to someone who has not read this book?
6. What is the mission statement of your church? How do missional communities help accomplish this mission? What if you choose to not have a missional community? What is likely to happen?
7. What is Jesus inviting you to do as a result of reading this book?

*“Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”*

*Jesus in John 13:17*