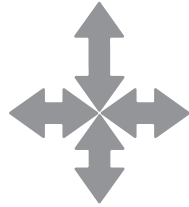




## GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of January 27th

This study is designed to help your community group grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. There are three dimensions to following Jesus.



**UP:** growing in relationship with God

**IN:** growing in relationship with other followers of Jesus

**OUT:** growing in relationship with the world around us as we join God in God's mission

### Get Started:

Share a story about a time when you got lost (maybe on a road-trip, in a new city, on vacation, etc.). How did you become "un-lost?"



**UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word**

Read aloud the passages for the week: Matthew 5:14-16. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. This is not a new command for the Jewish people. They had been called to be light for "all nations" and "for the Gentiles" in the past (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, etc.). Throughout the Old Testament, when did Israel do this well? When did they fail to do this?
2. Where do you see darkness in our world? When you read the news or travel internationally, what grabs your heart?
3. As you watch the news, talk with friends and family around the country, and participate in social media, where do you see darkness in our nation?
4. Where is there darkness in our city? When you look around our city, interact with your neighbors, look out your office window, etc., where do you see a need for the light of Christ?
5. How can you, in following Jesus, bring light to these places?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>N.T. Wright, Matthew for Everyone Part 1 Chapters 1-15.(Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 42.



## **Out: : Connect with the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)**

A gathering of believers becomes a city on a hill. It becomes a light. There is nothing that matches the power of the local church when it is faithful to Jesus Christ.

When you think of First Pres's role in Colorado Springs, what opportunities do you see for our church in the next ten years?

What will need to change for us to most effectively shine light in a shifting world?

How will you participate in this?



## **IN: Connect with Each Other**

Close by having one person lead the group in prayer, pausing to allow space for silent prayer at the identified times.

Jesus said: "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world."  
Lord, we pray now for the world in which we are called to let our light shine.

We pray for the people who will see our good deeds;  
and for our church which proclaims the light of the gospel.

Strengthen the faith of your people.

Bless the members of our congregation  
that they may be salt and light in the world.

Bring to faith those we are currently thinking about who do not yet know you.

*Briefly pause for people to silently lift up names to the Lord.*

Lord our God, have mercy on all nations, and bless our own land.

Bring honesty and justice, peace and safety everywhere.

Bless and protect people in work and leisure.

Allow them to see your goodness, to know your peace, and to experience your love.

Comfort those who are suffering, downcast or oppressed.

Lift up the fallen and satisfy the needs of the hungry, refugees,  
the homeless and those who lack even basics such as clothing.

Help those in our own lives who are struggling as we silently lift them up to you now.

*Briefly pause for people to silently lift up names to the Lord.*

You are the light shining in the darkness of our world.

Teach us to love one another as you love us,  
so that we may bring peace and joy to the world and bear your light for all to see.

Hear our prayers, for the sake of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
now and forever.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Adaptation of a prayer in the Lutheran Church of Australia's liturgy which can be viewed here: <http://www.lca.org.au/worship/cowadmin/?p=5594>