



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Guide: Sept 30 / Oct 1, 2023

This guide is designed to help you be and become “deeply rooted followers of Jesus” by contributing to increasingly authentic and loving relationships with one another and with God.

GATHER

Deeply rooted through a *community based context*. This section is meant to heighten your awareness of God's presence in your time together, and give one another space to talk about what's really going on in life.

- Pray. Thoughtfully acknowledge God's presence in the room. Commit your time together to him.
- What practical needs should everyone know about? What can we do as a group to help?
- What decisions are you facing? Is there any input you'd like from us as a group?
- What are you praying about right now? How can we as a group join you in prayer?
- Does anyone have a story of where you've seen God at work? Is there something we can join you in celebrating?

GROW

Deeply rooted through *biblically based content*. This section is meant to overlap with the current weekend teaching at your Northview campus and position you, as a group, to be formed by studying Scripture.

- Pray - acknowledge God's presence, and ask for his help to hear what he's saying.
- Revisit the weekend sermon. Is there something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?
- Engage our guided reflection on Scripture. **The primary text from the weekend sermon was John 12:35-50.**
 - **Step 1: Read + Observe The Text**

Familiarize yourself with the section of verses.

○ Step 2: Understand Their Story

Ask questions to observe what the author is communicating to the original audience.

- You may have heard of the term “FOMO” (fear of missing out). Have you ever “missed out” on something that, if you had a second chance to do things differently, you’d make sure you didn’t miss? (Anyone wish they’d actually got those tickets to Coldplay last weekend?)
- Try and imagine how this scene builds off of all that came before it in the weeks and years previously as you examine John 12:37-38.
 - Quick hit questions: What term does John use to describe what Jesus had been doing (v.37)? What was the people’s response (v.37)? Why does he point back to the prophet Isaiah (v.38)?
- Read John 12:39-43.¹ Why are people reluctant to confess their “belief” in Jesus?
 - Is this still an issue for people today?
- Jesus says some significant and direct things to the crowds in 12:44-50.
 - What does Jesus say about the authority behind his teaching here?
 - Based on what you see in this passage regarding his authority, does this challenge or contradict other views you’ve encountered about the identity of Jesus? How could this passage reinforce your beliefs about who Jesus is?

○ Step 3: Connect To His Story

Ask questions to understand how this text fits in the larger gospel story.

- John quotes the prophet Isaiah in 12:38-41. This text may appear to create difficulty for us today as we think about why some people don’t believe. Check out the context of Isaiah’s prophecy for some starting points to think more deeply about this.
 - For the reference in John 12:38, read Isaiah 53:1-12
 - In context, what is Isaiah prophesying about who Jesus is and what he would do?
 - What is he prophesying about how humanity would respond to him?
 - What do we see John saying in 12:37-43 about how people are responding to Jesus? What is the “human responsibility” component of their unbelief?
 - Build off of these observations and look up the reference to Isaiah 6:9-10 in John 12:40.
 - In context, what type of people is God “blinding” and “hardening” here? Look up some key places that come before Isaiah 6 for answers: Isaiah 1:2-5, 2:6-8, 3:13-15 and 5:20-24. How does this shape our understanding of humanity and God’s response to humanity?
 - What do we see John saying in 12:37-43 about how people are responding to Jesus? What is the “human responsibility” component of their unbelief?

○ Step 4: Apply To Our Story

Ask questions to discern what God is telling us to do with the help of the Holy Spirit.

- There’s a tension in Christian theology between “God’s sovereignty” and “human responsibility”. John 12:37-43 may have surfaced this for you. Christian theologians have debated where to draw firm conclusions here and land in various places. But this isn’t just an academic exercise. There are real lives and destinies in the mix.

¹ As you read these verses the first time, don’t get sidetracked by the prophecies about unbelief! We’ll talk about that in STEP 3 (the “Connect to His Story”) section, as we read other biblical texts to help us figure out what John is saying.

- Regardless of where you land, and the tensions you feel here about the “specifics” of this topic, what “general” gospel truths about God’s heart for the world from John 12:35-50 can you carry into your prayers and interactions with unbelieving loved ones and friends?
- Reflect on John 12:42-43.
 - Where do you sometimes relate to the “authorities” who believe in Jesus but don’t confess it?
 - Is there something this text motivates you to think differently about in order to shift your perspective of “the praise/glory that comes from God?” Human glory/praise? How can you act on this?

GO

Deeply rooted through *culturally relevant applications*. This section is meant to prompt practices that bring the life of God’s kingdom into us and out to others.

- Pray for your group’s **5x5x5** lists!²
- Is there something that seems especially relevant for us to do personally based on our discussion?
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do together based on our discussion?
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do to spend time with someone who doesn’t yet follow Jesus?

² *This is something that we’re putting deliberately at the top here. Every time. If you don’t know what these are, “5x5x5 cards” are available at each campus on the weekend, or at <https://northview.org/5x5x5/>*