

INTRO

Describe a time when someone put your needs ahead of their own. And how did it make you feel?

IDEA 1

One would have expected Jesus to take a few weeks or longer to process his grief, to rest, to think. But, despite the physical and emotional exhaustion that comes with grief, Jesus put others' needs first. We can't be as selfless as Jesus but I know I can be more selfless, and I suspect you can be too

As a group read Matthew 14 together

From the reading how do you see Jesus putting others' needs before himself? What does it tell us about Jesus?

In what ways do you tend to be more selfish rather than selfless?

In what ways does our culture tell us to put our needs before others?

IDEA 2

Putting others first is what sets Christ-followers apart from the rest of a lost world. In all of this world's brokenness, division, sadness, and violence... loving one another - putting others first - is the testimony of Jesus, of His love and self-sacrifice, to a world that desperately needs the hope of a savior.

What are some of the ways the Church is to demonstrate "putting others first" to the outside world?

How do you discern the balance of "putting others before yourself" and still caring for yourself?

Is there someone in your life who demonstrates selflessness? How would you describe them?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

One of the ways we are commanded to demonstrate our care for others is through the practice of intercessory prayer. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, *"Intercessory prayer is the purifying bath into which the individual and the fellowship must enter every day."* Richard Foster adds, *"When we move from petition to intercession, we are shifting our center of gravity from our own needs to the needs and concerns of others. Intercessory prayer is selfless prayer, even self-giving prayer."*

With your group, open up some time for each individual to share their needs/requests in prayer for this particular season. As a group, consider composing a liturgical prayer that includes each individual's needs and requests to God.

The hope is that, both individually and corporately, this intercessory prayer can be repeated as a selfless practice toward God on behalf of others.

APPLICATION

As you continue your week, try to discern all the relational spheres of your life. How can you put others' needs before your own in each relational sphere of influence? You may want to try all four or choose one specific sphere this week.

- **Family:** How can I put my family's needs over my own this week?
- **Social:** How can I put my friend's needs over my own this week?
- **Work:** How can I put my coworker's needs over my own this week?
- **Neighborhood:** How can I put my neighbor's needs over my own this week?