



March 2018

Yield ing

## Noticing Others (25 minutes)

Say: Welcome to life groups!

### Opening Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for this opportunity for us to gather together today! We ask that your presence would be among us as we read your word, share and discuss. Help us to be open to one another and to you as we learn how to follow you more closely each day. Amen.

*This month we are talking about **yielding and surrender** as our theme on Sunday mornings. In Life Groups, we are going to look at how we spend our time, how Jesus yielded or surrendered himself and how we can also do so with our time and in our relationships. We want to notice how God is inviting us to yield to him and to others.*

## Noticing God (40 minutes)

**Jump in:** Watch this video entitled: The Time you Have (In Jelly Beans)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOksW\\_NabEk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOksW_NabEk)

Ask: How did this video make you feel?

*(If you can't watch the video, move on to these questions)*

Ask: How do you feel about where your time goes? What surprises you about this? What would you change?

Ask: Which of your time commitments is the most life-giving? Which is the most tiring?

*Say Something Like:* Time might be our most valuable resource because it can't be replaced. We give it every day to all kinds of things. Chances are, if you had a day all to yourself to do whatever you want, you'd use the hours differently than what's in your planner or how you spent today. But we can't always do that. Instead, we yield our time in various ways. In a way this video asks us to yield to a bigger picture, helping us to see the value of yielding to important things.

### To yield:

to give up, relinquish, or give away, usually by choice. Yielding is linked to the idea of submission—giving up some of our own power in order to submit to the will of another.

*Ask:* Look at the definition in the box of the word “to yield.” In what ways do we yield as part of our commitment as a Christian. What or who do we yield to as we seek to follow Christ? Can you share an example from your own life or someone you have observed?

*Say, in your own words, or have someone read:* Yielding things like our time, talents, gifts, and money is not easy. In fact, it’s really difficult. Yielding requires loss, and it also requires us to trust that the loss is for the better. When it comes to following Jesus, yielding is often the pathway to growth and maturity. Next we will look at Jesus as a model of yielding and make connections to our own life.

### **Notice God’s Word:**

In the passage we’re about to read, it’s Jesus’ last night here on earth. He and the disciples have just eaten their final meal together.

- Read John 13:1-15 aloud as a group

**13** Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup>The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup>got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, “One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.” <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

<sup>12</sup>After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? <sup>13</sup>You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup>So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. <sup>15</sup>For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

You might consider some of the metaphorical yielding going on as well:

- Tables in Jesus’ time and culture were typically shaped like an upside-down U. The best place at the table would have been at the middle of the U. The least prestigious place would’ve been at the ends of the U. As the group’s leader, Jesus would have been at the best place. For him to give up his place would also be an act of of going up power and status.
- Just like today, clothing in Jesus’ time was an indicator of status and social standing. To trade his clothes for a servant’s clothes (wrapping himself in a towel) means Jesus is yielding his status and rights for those of a lowly servant.
- Footwashing was one of the least desirable task of the ancient world. If you were a footwasher, it meant you were among the lowliest of the low when it came to status. By doing this job, Jesus clearly identified himself as a servant and as someone who cares about the people who usually get overlooked.

- What do you notice Jesus yielding in this passage? (if it helps, have someone read the passage again and listen with this question in mind) *Answers may include his regular clothes, his place at the table, his status, or the ability not to argue with Peter.*
- Can you imagine what it would have been like to have been there? How would you have felt, or what would you have said when Jesus offered to wash your feet?
- In Verse 15, Jesus says he has given his followers an example. An example of what? What is Jesus trying to teach us, specifically about yielding?

*(You can skip to the “Now what?” section below, but if your group has more time, or wants to go deeper, take advantage of looking at a second passage)*

- Read Philippians 2:1-11 aloud as a group, it is included below in The Message translation. Feel free to also look at it in an additional translation.

Philippians 2:1-11

**2** <sup>1-4</sup> If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care— then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

<sup>5-8</sup> Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became *human!* Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn’t claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

<sup>9-11</sup> Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

- What did you notice about yielding as we read this passage?
- What new questions did it raise for you about your own life?
- How is the yielding we’re talking about today connected to the theme of love that we focused on last month?

**Now what?** I wonder what it might look like for you and me to yield more of our lives to Jesus? Can you think of some examples? What Challenges do you foresee? What might success look like? How might we as a group help each other?

**Experiment:** In many ways, we are making choices every day about whether and how we want to yield to God. Reflect Silently to yourself to these two questions: *What aspects of the way that I'm spending my time show that I'm yielding to God?*

*If I wanted to yield my schedule to God even further, what might I want to change?* During the next month, experiment by trying to change at least one tangible part of your day or week that would help you yield to God. Could you find a reminder, a bracelet, an alarm or a partner to remind you of your commitment? If you are willing, share that with the group.

## Noticing God's Activity in our Life (20 minutes)

### Noticing God's Activity in our Life (Closing Prayer)

Noting how much time is left, please go around the circle and give people the opportunity to share prayer requests. Then have a time of prayer. Begin that prayer with silence, then pray for requests that have been shared.

*Optional prayer:*

Loving God,

Thank you for your activity in our lives. Thank you for our time together. Thank you for the ways you yielded to the Father emptying yourself to become human and surrendering even to the point of death on the cross. We ask today that you would help us as we seek to follow you and learn how to yield to you and others in new ways. AMEN.

Before you leave:

- End with next date and time details (who is hosting, who is leading, who is providing a snack?)
- Thank everyone for being there. See you next month!

## Optional Extras for Later...

### For more reading:

**A practice:** A few months ago we looked at the examen. In the examen you take time at the end of the day to prayerfully see where God was active in your life. This month, use the examen practice, but relate it to yielding. At the end of the day ask yourself these two questions:

Where did I yield today (to God, Jesus, my spouse, my friend...)?

Where did I not yield today to God, Jesus, my spouse, my friend...)?

End with a prayer thanking God for his activity and presence in your life.

### Activities for the family:

- Give your family a real-life example of yielding. Maybe you take a chore off someone's plate or run an errand...something that is an act of yielding what matters to you for the sake of another. It could lead to some beautiful and creative "pay it forward" moments.
- If your family were to yield a few hours sometime, or even half a day, what could you do together? Dream of ways you can team up and bless others and each other. This might be helping at our community meal, helping out for a morning at the local food bank, or visiting some older folks in a home, or just spending unstructured down time with one another if it's been awhile. If the thought of yielding that time seems nonsensical since everyone is so busy and has important commitments (and believe us, we're there with you) – even better! Talk about why you feel that way as a family, and what it might look like to yield less of your time to certain commitments in order to yield more time to serving or playing together.
- Imagine your relationships in light of Colossians 3:1-14. Consider reading this together as a family and talk about ways your family might live more in line with Paul's words in this passage in your giving thanks to God the Father through him." Perhaps this becomes a passage you post somewhere in your home this week to encourage one another to yield all that we do to God.