

**Ninth Sunday after Pentecost  
For Group Meetings from July 15 through July 21**

**Prayer of the Day:** O God, powerful and compassionate, you shepherd your people, faithfully feeding and protecting us. Heal each of us, and make us a whole people, that we may embody the justice and peace of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER:**

**Share:** How did last week's scripture (Mark 6:14-29) work in your life?

**Mission:** What was most satisfying about your ministry last week? Where do you see God at work? How did you participate in God's missional activity? ***How did inviting go last Saturday and Sunday? How many new people did you talk to?***

**Hear:** Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

**Explore Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What strikes you in this passage: what stands out or raises questions?
2. The tired disciples returned from their mission. How did Jesus respond to them and what was he teaching them about ministry?
3. The crowds on the first shore were "like sheep without a shepherd" and at Gennesaret, they mobbed him with the sick. How did Jesus respond to each group of people?

**Connect Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

4. Jesus sent the disciples on a mission, but when they returned, he took them to rest. What does he teach us about "self care?" How or where do you find rest? What steps could you take to make time for rejuvenation in your life?
5. How do you balance compassion for others with the needs and demands in your personal life? What helps you decide where to share your resources and time?
6. The world is full of anxiety and pressure to succeed. How do you share solace, comfort, and peace with others? What gives you solace, comfort, and peace?

**Prepare:** Memorize this verse: "*And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.*" (Mark 6:56). How do you hear God calling you?

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:**

**Obey:** During this week follow through on your intentions.

**Meditate:** Read Psalm 23. How does this speak into your life?

**Reflect:** What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

**OUR MISSION TOGETHER:** As a missional congregation we celebrate Christ's presence, invite people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and equip them to serve in a broken world.

**Notes for ChristCare leaders:**

Jesus had sent the disciples out two by two on a difficult mission where they depended upon other people's hospitality, as they taught about Jesus and shared his healing power. They came back to Jesus, reported their successes, and were obviously tired and overwhelmed by the crowds following them. So much need in the world! Jesus took them away to a deserted place to rest. He had sent them out to others to share themselves, but then he gathered them in to rest together. He also taught them to go apart in prayer throughout the Gospel. Jesus set an example as a compassionate shepherd who gathered people into flocks to share God's love. He did not reject those in need, yet he also did take time to renew and refresh apart. As God's servants, we see many needs around us and know we are called to serve. We can teach about God's love for us in Jesus, share his peace, joy, and healing love. But we also must get our strength from him and not try to do it ourselves. Jesus gives us his wisdom, his peace, his joy through the Holy Spirit as a fountain of strength for us to draw upon in all that we do. As Paul said in 2 Corinthians, God's grace is sufficient, so where we are weak, we are strong in Christ working through us. Pausing in prayer and resting in him is just as important as actively living out our faith serving others. Go in peace, rest in Him!

Thanks be to God,  
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Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those  
Who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
And the glory are yours,  
Now and forever. Amen.

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
Born of the virgin Mary,  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified died and was buried;  
He descended to the dead,  
On the third day he rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
He will come to judge the living and the  
dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
The holy catholic church,  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And the life everlasting. Amen