

## **Growth Group Leader's Guide**

For the Week of May 9-15, 2010  
"Who Needs Friends?"

### **Announcements:**

- Finalize your Group Covenant and have group members sign it. Once you have it signed, please send Pastor Larry a copy.
- It's not too early to begin discussing a service project and/or a group social for the end of the Spring Quarter. If you need ideas, please contact Pastor Larry.
- Please email your attendance and a brief summary of your meeting each week to [pastorlarry@ccsalem.org](mailto:pastorlarry@ccsalem.org).

### **Homework:**

Before your Growth Group meets, take about 20 minutes on your own to complete the following...

Read the following verses from Proverbs: 13:20; 17:9,17; 18:1,24; 19:6-7; 20:19; 22:24-25; 27:6,10,17.

What wisdom does Solomon give you about the kind of person you should be looking for in a close friend? From these verses, what do you need God to help you with in becoming a better friend to others?

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### **Growth Group Discussion Questions:**

The following questions are to be discussed when your Growth Group meets this week.

**My Story:** Describe one of the best friendships you've ever had. How did that friend affect you and change you?

**Digging Deeper:** Read Mark 2:1-12.

1. Think about the paralyzed man. What do you think was challenging for him in order to be friends with the group of men?

*(He must have wrestled with his sense of dependence at times. He may have become jealous of their independence since they could walk and he couldn't. He may have struggled with how they saw him in his neediness. He certainly had to trust them to carry him even though he was vulnerable)*

2. What do the actions of the four men tell you about the kind of friends they were to the paralyzed man?

*(They served the paralyzed man by picking him up and taking him to see Jesus. They didn't let some challenges get in their way. They took a risk by crashing through the roof)*

3. What did Jesus see in these four men that led to His work in the paralyzed man? What does that tell us about the importance and value of spiritual friendships?

*(Jesus saw their faith. Great friends want to get their friends close to Jesus. Jesus didn't just heal the man physically - He forgave the man's sins. When we are in authentic community with Jesus and others, our sins are able to be safely brought out into the open and forgiven)*

4. How do you think Jesus' healing of the paralyzed man affected his friendship with the other four men from that point on?

*(It was no doubt deepened and strengthened since he knew the great lengths his friends would go to help him. He probably came to realize that greater than the gift of being able to walk was the gift of having deep, meaningful relationships)*

**Living It:** His friends carried the paralyzed man while he was lying on a mat. That mat is a symbol of human brokenness and imperfection. The truth is, everybody has a "mat." It may be fear, anger, lack of trust, the need to be in control, a past failure, inadequacy, loneliness, or any number of things.

1. Who carries your "mat" for you sometimes? Who do you show your weaknesses and struggles to? Who do you trust with your brokenness? Is this easy for you? Why or why not?

*(Be willing to challenge your group members to pay the price for developing the kind of relationships where they*

*not only carry someone else's mat, but they are willing to be carried by someone else that they trust)*

2. Are you more likely to carry someone else's "mat" for them or to allow someone else to carry yours? Why?

*(Talk about how to overcome whatever barriers may exist to either carrying someone else's mat or allowing someone to carry you)*

3. Whose faith had had a "roof-crashing" affect on your life?

*(By "roof crashing" we mean someone who went the extra mile to bring you to Jesus or someone whose faithfulness had a deep spiritual impact on you)*

4. From this group discussion, your homework, and Sunday's message, what is one action step that you need to take in order to become a better friend?