

Home Group Leader Discussion Guide

Advent Week 2: Peace in the Midst of Politics

- Q. Describe how you feel about the current political climate. (What words would you use to describe it? But also, what words would you use to describe the feelings it evokes in you?)
- Q. Following up to the previous question, what role does your faith in Jesus play in helping you navigate the current political climate and your feelings about it?

An appropriate and accurate way to understand the Church (i.e. followers of Jesus past, present, and future) is as an alternative society within the midst of the dominate society. Think about this: there is a King (Jesus), there is a Kingdom (wherever Jesus' reign is recognized), and there are those who recognize His reign (citizens of the Kingdom...i.e. the Church). Notice, this is far more of a political reality and focus than a "spiritual" one. That is how we should view/understand it. The word translated "church" in the New Testament is "ekklesia" which is a socio-political term, not a religious or spiritual term, which means "the assembled citizens of a particular place". This is the term the New Testament writers chose to use, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to describe the collective followers of Jesus. Just as we have "domesticated" Jesus in many ways, we have also "domesticated" the church. We must get back to a place where we embrace Jesus in ALL HIS AUTHORITY, and recognize more clearly His vision for His Church. The reality is, WE are called to be SO MUCH MORE than we currently live into.

- Q. What do you think about the church as a socio-political entity? In what ways do you think the church is living faithfully into the vision/design/calling that Jesus has in mind for His people? In what ways do you think the church is falling short? (By "church" feel free to consider broadly and/or congregationally.)
- Q. When you think of "peace", what thoughts, feelings, and images does that evoke in you?
- Q. As you consider the idea of "peace", where do you observe peace within our world? Where do you observe a lack of peace? (You can also apply this question on a personal level.)

(Here's a link to a short video that you can watch about the Biblical term "peace"...you'll need to scroll down to find it, but it's pretty obvious.)

<https://thebibleproject.com/advent-word-series-churches/>

- Q. Different people have different ideas of "peace" (both what it is, and how to attain it). What are some of the various ideas out there that you can think of? How do those compare to the Biblical idea of peace?

- Q. During the sermon, Mary's Song (the Magnificat) was the main text. The opening line of the song is, "My soul glorifies (magnifies) the Lord..." (Luke 1:46). We all "magnify" something. What do you magnify?
- Q. As you consider Mary's Song/The Magnificat, what line of the song stands out to you?
- Q. As you consider Mary's Song/The Magnificat, what does it have to do with "peace"?
- Q. One of the popular passages from the Bible this time of year (appropriately so) is Isaiah 9:6-7. Spend some time reflecting on that passage...maybe even the whole chapter. Notice how political it is. When we think of Jesus as the "Prince of Peace", how do we often over-spiritualize that?
- Q. Putting Isaiah 9 and Mary's Song together, what do we learn about God?