

Reflection Guide

The Way of Love with Bishop Michael Curry: Season 2, Episode 6

Going into the Neighborhood to Listen Deeply

How to Use This Guide

For personal devotion

Listen to the podcast episode one or two times. Next, set aside 20 minutes of quiet time to reflect on the following Scripture and questions. Consider writing your responses to the prompts in a journal. Close your time in prayer.

As a group

Before you meet, ask members to listen to this episode. Open your meeting by sharing the Scripture. Next, you may either listen to the episode again as a group or move on to the Questions for Reflection. As a group, discuss your thoughts about and answers to the questions. Finally, close your time together with the prayer.

Scripture

Take a moment to read and reflect on the Scripture. What word or phrase stands out to you? What might the Holy Spirit be saying to you through this passage?

John 4:7-15

⁷ A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” ⁸ (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) ⁹ The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) ¹⁰ Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”

¹¹ The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?” ¹² Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” ¹³ Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

¹⁵ The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Questions for Reflection

Use these questions for personal reflection, group discussion, or both.

1. In this episode, Bishop Curry explains that on the Way of Love, we “actually go into the world as an instrument of God’s hospitality, which for us is to both give and receive. To both show hospitality and to graciously receive hospitality.” To “go” without this balance of giving and receiving risks making Go an imperialist command instead of an opportunity for mutuality. Receiving sometimes requires more vulnerability than giving. Do you find it harder to receive than to give? Can you think of a time when you had to be vulnerable in receiving?
2. Bishop Curry shared a very personal story about a time when he was humbled deeply by a woman who gave him a very rich gift, even though it looked like so little on the outside. In receiving her offering of hospitality, Bishop Curry had to be vulnerable in many ways. Can you think of a time when you had to be vulnerable in receiving?
3. Guest Katie Nakamura Rengers shares about her work at The Abbey, a coffee house church in Birmingham, Alabama. Katie shares that part of her going work is getting to know those who visit the coffee shop. Following the model of Jesus’ conversing with strangers, she begins small and works into deeper questions and listening. How can listening be part of your practice of “go”? Who in your community needs to be noticed and heard? What steps can you take to give and receive from them?

Prayer

A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.