

Counter Rev Small Group Conversation based on Matthew 7:1-6

Keep this conversation no longer than 35-45 minutes. Do your best to draw out the contributions of everyone. Don't be 'rigid' in the use of this guide - reword or change or leave out questions if you want. Encourage people to bring their Bibles. Be ready to adjust your night, or offer more explanation, if there is someone there who is not a Christian.

Getting to know each other

- Why not start the meeting with Communion (possibly as part of a meal / snack time)? Either as a large group, or in smaller groups, pray in gratitude for God's gift of grace through Christ. Don't put pressure on new people to pray.

Understanding and applying Christ's teaching in Matthew 7:1-6

- Say, 'In communion we celebrated God's grace to us. Now we learn to extend God's grace to others.' Then read Matthew 7:1-6 together.
- *If some of your group did not hear the Sunday message, then play the summary audio clip.*
- *Read verses 1-2.* The word 'judge' here refers to an attitude of condemnation and self-righteous criticism. Why is judging so destructive? Is Jesus saying that we should not discern, or perhaps not even notice the faults, sins and wrong beliefs in others?
- *Read verses 3-5.* What is Jesus trying to say here? Do you have any experiences to share from your own dealing with people when you practiced, or perhaps failed to practice, what he teaches here?
- One way of understanding verses 3-5 is: 'If you want to see someone else change, first change yourself.' Practically, how can we apply this insight to our relationships (i.e. parenting, marriage, friendship, work relationships etc)?
- *Read verse 6.* This verse, though difficult to understand, likely teaches that we mustn't try to help people far from God *in unhelpful ways*. What are some common wrong attitudes we have, or approaches we take, as we try to share our faith with people far from God?
- Read Matthew 10:16. If Matthew 7:6 tells us how not to reach out to people far from God, what does this Matthew 10:16 tell us about how to effectively do it?
- Which people far from God, if any, have you recently had spiritual conversations with? Tell us what happened.

Praying for people far from God

- Everyone writes on a separate piece of paper the names of one or two people far from God that they are trusting God to save. They are also to write down next to the name(s) what they perceive the obstacle or obstacles to faith in that person. Then swap papers and each person on their own spends two minutes praying for the people listed. If God gives you any insight as you pray - be ready to give that feedback to the person who wrote their name.