

Counter Rev Small Group Conversation based on Matthew 5:38-48

Keep this conversation no longer than 35-45 minutes. Do your best to draw out the contributions of everyone. Land the time in prayer, but remember to gently coach people who haven't prayed in a group before. There is no pressure to pray aloud. Encourage people to download the commentary of Matthew 5:38-48 off the website for personal study during their devotional times this week. Also remind people to bring their Bibles to group.

Getting to know each other

- Tell us about any one person outside your own family who, when you were growing up, made life particularly hard for you?

Understanding Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:38-48

- *If some of your group did not hear the Sunday message, then play the summary audio clip.*
- *Read verses 38-42.* Jesus teaches us that when wronged, we are not to be vengeful or retaliatory. Instead we are to act in genuine love toward those who insult us (v39), accuse us (v40), exploit us (v41) or inconvenience us (v42). Some people understand that this means we're meant to be 'doormats'. Do you agree?
- *Read verses 44-45.* An enemy is someone who makes life difficult for us. In your opinion, why is prayer for 'our enemies' so important?
- *Read verses 46-48.* It is easy to love people who love and bless us, but almost impossible to love those who hate us, or make life hard for us, or are very different to us. According to these verses, why is it so important to Jesus that his disciples learn to do so?
- *Read verse 44-48 once more.* What does Jesus teach us about God in verses?

Praying through and applying Christ's teaching in Matthew 5:38-48 (get in groups of 3 for this part)

- Pray short, heart-felt prayers together that affirm God as the loving Father, who loves even those who don't love him.
- If you're willing to, share with the group you're in whether there is a person (or more) who is making life difficult for you right now. Then pray together and perhaps for each other, asking the Father to fill your heart with his love for the person. Be open to God giving you ideas about practically demonstrating love to that person.