



Sermon Discussion Guide for I AM Worship Church

Really, Are You For Me?

Pastor Mark Ogletree • Sunday, December 10, 2023



We hope this material will continue to minister as the sermon was preached during our weekly worship service. When we receive God's Word at church, we need not only to hear the message, but we ought to walk it out in our daily lives. We should "be doers of the word, not only hearers." (James 1:22)

Step 1: GET TOGETHER with your family or group.

Step 2: REVIEW the key points and scriptures from the message.

Step 3: SHARE with your group what God is saying to you through the message.

Step 4: PRAY together, for each other and over each other to continue to walk this word out.

The Big Idea (Discussion Starter)

This week we delved into the powerful concept of being "for" others as God is "for" us. The central question, "God, if you are for me, why am I going through this?" was explored, revealing the complexity of our relationship with God and with one another. The sermon emphasized that being "for" someone goes beyond mere tolerance; it involves demonstrating love and compassion while upholding God's truth and standards. We were encouraged to extend grace to others, regardless of their struggles, as Jesus did for us.

The sermon highlighted three key principles: compassion, forgiveness, and initiating meaningful relationships. Through biblical references, it reinforced the importance of compassion by citing instances where Jesus showed deep empathy and healed the sick. Forgiveness was portrayed as a liberating act, drawing from Jesus's teachings on forgiveness in **Matthew 18:21-22**.

Lastly, the sermon underscored Jesus's intentional initiation of relationships with people, challenging us to meet others where they are and initiate meaningful connections. Overall, the big idea was to inspire us to be a church that is genuinely "for" people, driven by compassion, forgiveness, and the initiation of transformative relationships.

Don't Miss This Point!

The first key point explored in the sermon was the significance of compassion. It emphasized that being "for" someone begins with having a heart full of compassion, just as Jesus did in numerous instances mentioned in the Bible, such as **Matthew 14:14** and **Luke 7:13**. The message was clear: compassion should be the driving force behind our interactions with others, transcending differences and motivating us to extend a helping hand.

We also focus on forgiveness, highlighting its pivotal role in setting people free from bondage. Drawing from **Matthew 18:21-22**, the sermon addressed the three stages of forgiveness—forgiving in the heart, telling the person, and praying together. It challenged us to let go of past hurts and extend the same grace and forgiveness that we've received from God. Forgiveness was presented as an essential aspect of being "for" others and fostering a loving and compassionate community.



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Another Great Point!

The notion of being "for" someone means embracing them while rejecting their sinful behaviors. Acceptance should not equate to approval of sin, illuminated by the example of accepting a gay lifestyle while remaining steadfast in our commitment to guide them towards God's Word, baptism, and the path of righteousness. We were reminded of the importance of loving people enough to encourage them to overcome sin, even when it's uncomfortable.

We focus on the necessity of maintaining our own spiritual standards and not compromising our faith, highlighted by the fact that being "for" people means caring more about their souls than their sins. This resonated with Jesus's teachings about not being of the world while being in the world. We are challenged to focus on the spiritual well-being of individuals rather than passing judgment based on appearances.

One Last Point!

We are encouraged to initiate relationships in the same way that Jesus did, and reminded of Jesus's approach in **Matthew 4:19** where He called His disciples to follow Him. Pastor Mark emphasized that Jesus initiated relationships, met people where they were, and welcomed them into His circle and encouraged us to do the same, reaching out to others with love and compassion.

There has been a shift occurring within the Church, where we have drifted from what Jesus intended. It called us to become a church of friends who pour into one another, believe in each other's potential, and are truly "for" each other. We are challenged to initiate relationships, meet people where they are, and foster a friendly church environment where everyone feels welcomed and loved.

Let's Be Doers!

Become more like Jesus!! We should all embody compassion, forgiveness, and the initiation of relationships in our daily lives, which means actively practicing empathy, forgiving others as we've been forgiven, and initiating meaningful connections with those around us. It is a reminder that to be "for" someone, we must be willing to change and align ourselves with the teachings and actions of Jesus.

Be encouraged to live out the principles discussed in this sermon, which calls us to be a church that genuinely cares for one another, extends grace, and initiates relationships that transform lives. Being "for" people requires us to be more like Jesus in our attitudes, actions, and relationships.