

Background - Rhythm of Life

<Provide some context to your group on how we're walking through different areas of our Rhythm of Life - with this series focused on generosity.>

The Rhythm of Life is a tool that we've provided to the Vox community to provide a framework for what spiritual growth and development looks like. In our attempts to support our community in their spiritual formation, we will provide our midweek groups an opportunity to dialogue and practice through each of the rhythms over a few seasons.

In the past, our midweek groups have spent seasons exploring Scripture and prayer and engaging each of those through different practices and expressions, and we have also spent seasons on evangelism and sabbath. The hope is as we package guides for each rhythm, groups can go through them at their own pace or as new groups start up.

Generosity: Session 1 Objectives

By the end of the night, the group will have a chance to discuss why it's important to be generous and better understand the motives for doing so.

Personal Experiences

Spend some time sharing about personal experiences and how you experienced or practiced generosity. Reflect on the challenges of why it's difficult to practice generosity.

1. What did generosity look like in your life as you grew up? Do you remember any specific experiences that stand out?

- *This is an opportunity for people to share about their background and what was modeled for them.*

2. Why is it challenging to be generous in the culture we live in?

- *This could range from consumeristic mindset, importance of recognition and reciprocation, systemic issues of trust, etc.*
- *Culture seems to teach us that generosity is "extra credit" - not a requirement.*
- *We think we are not in a position to give (lack of money, time, etc)*

Motives for Generosity

Reflect on what typically motivates our generosity.

3. What motivates us to be generous?

- *Focus on different things that cause us to be generous*
- *Ex: social (approval from others), financial (tax benefits), personal (feel good about ourselves), spiritual (because God tells us to do it)*

Scripture on Generosity

Give everyone some time to remember/research/reflect on what Scripture describes as healthy motivation for generosity. There are a couple of passages for reference if none come to mind and more in the appendix.

4. What are some other motives for generosity that are in Scripture?

- *1 John 3:16-18 - This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.*
- *Because God has first been generous with us. Everything we have comes from God – tithing at Vox "We now come to a time where we realize nothing in this life is truly ours, but that all is a gift from God."*
- *Acts 4:32-35 - All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.*
 - *Because we can. We as a country have arguably more resources than any generation in the history of the world – money, knowledge, technology, etc. What will we choose to do with these resources?*
 - *Story of the founder of Charity Water – going from promoting nightclubs in NYC to feeling that he wanted to do something with his life that would actually be beneficial to others. http://www.charitywater.org/about/scotts_story.php*

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

5. Could generosity be bad if it's done from a wrong heart?

- *Back in February Gid talked about doing things because we're loved and doing things because we're seeking to be loved. The outcome can look very similar, but it comes from two completely different motivations. Maybe we could look at generosity the same way.*

Prayer

Close your time in prayer for any reflections that came from this time of dialogue and also allow space for any personal areas that require care.

Appendix - Other Resources**Story of the founder of Charity Water**

Scott Harrison founder of Charity Water says the following about charity. But before you read it, substitute the word "generosity" for the word "charity."

For me, charity is practical. It's sometimes easy, more often inconvenient, but always necessary. It's the ability to use one's position of influence, relative wealth and power to affect lives for the better. Charity is singular and achievable.

There's a biblical parable about a man beaten near death by robbers. He's stripped naked and lying roadside. Most people pass him by, but one man stops. He picks him up and bandages his wounds. He puts him on his horse and walks alongside until they reach an inn. He checks him in and throws down his Amex. "Whatever he needs until he gets better." Because he could.

...In Colossians 3, the Bible instructs readers to "put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

Although I'm still not sure what that means, I love the idea. To wear charity.

Other Scripture

Genesis 4:3-5 - In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor.

Colossians 3:12-15 - Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Acts 20:35 - In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Matthew 6:1-4 - "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

1 John 3:16-18 - This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Luke 10:30-35 - In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'