

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: WEEK 5

STRETCHED THIN
UNLOADING THE BURDEN
MATTHEW 11:28-30
10/16/2016



MAIN POINT

The body of believers supports one another in unloading burdens and resting in Jesus' grace.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Have you ever had a time in your life where you got so busy or worn out that you began to miss church?

What are some things that compete with our church attendance?

If Sunday is supposed to be a day of rest, why does it so often feel like work? Getting up earlier than you'd like, getting ready, getting the kids ready—it's a lot of effort. Sometimes, it just feels better to sneak out of the house and go play golf, or to just stay home and sleep in.

When we are stretched thin, what is the motivation for adding church to our list of things to do? We know that God wants us to meet together, and we know that we serve Him, in part, by ministering to others in the church. Today, we will talk about how, though the church may make us busier, it can make our lives less burdensome and more fulfilling.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ MATTHEW 11:28.

How does Jesus help us with our burdens? What kind of rest does He give us?

What does this have to do with coming to church?

Jesus gives us rest in the world by pardoning us from all of our sins. He gives us rest by giving us peace with God through His death on the cross. He gives us rest by His resurrection so that we no longer have to fear death.

The church is the body of Christ; through our brothers and sisters, God gives us rest. Our church family will help us carry our burdens through times of difficulty. Our church includes people who understand our busy lives, and probably people who have already "been there and done that" who can help us navigate our lives. Instead of church adding a burden, it is a place of help where burdens can be lifted.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 11:29.

What does it mean for Jesus to be gentle and humble in heart?

How does Jesus' character give us peace?

Jesus is patient with us. He gives us fresh opportunities and forgiveness every day. Anyone who comes to Him in contrition will never be bullied, brow beaten, or disapproved. He loves us with infinite patience and humility.

Our churches should be a model for this kind of grace, gentleness, and humility as well. At church, we are surrounded by fellow sinners who are in need of God's grace and forgiveness, and they need our grace and forgiveness as well. If we are gentle and humble like our Lord, then people will be able to learn to live without shame and anxiety over their own sins.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 11:30.

What sorts of burdens do you think the people that Jesus spoke to carried? What burdens might we share with them?

How can helping others ease your own burdens?

The religious leaders of Jesus' day had compiled over 600 laws that the people had to keep in order to be "right with God". The problem for them, and for us, is that we cannot keep the law of God. Though we may try, we will ultimately fail because of the condition of our hearts. This leads us to despair.

Jesus' burden is light because our duty is to love Him, and He is easy to love! He gave His life so we might be freed from the penalty of the law. In church, we are reminded of this good news, and we have the opportunity to tell others this good news as well. The gospel gives our life significance and purpose. The gospel gives us peace, and by sharing the good news and worshipping Christ who saved us with the church, we can also help others find peace as well.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Are there habits or addictions that we need to give up that might be competing for our time in gathering with the church?

What are some things we might have to say "no" to in order to say "yes" to church?

How can we make sure our small group is a place where people come and get rest through Christ?

PRAY

In a time of group prayer, ask the Father to help us see and appreciate the rest we can receive through the fellowship of the saints. Pray that our church will be a place where people come and find rest in Jesus. Ask the Lord to give us all servant hearts so that we might help people in times of difficulty.

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 11:28-30

11:28-30 Jesus' words recall a statement made by personified Wisdom in a Jewish document dating to several hundred

years before Christ (Sir 6:18-31; 51:23-27). When combined with Mt 11:19, this suggests that Jesus portrayed Himself as personified Wisdom, the One who exists eternally and acted on Yahweh's behalf to create the world. (1Co 1:24). Jesus' teaching provided an easy yoke in contrast to the heavy, suppressive yoke of rabbinic teaching (23:4; Ac 15:10).