



Matthew 7

a better kingdom

PREPARATION BEFORE THE GROUP MEETS:

The aim of this preparation is to encourage good & prayerful observation of the text of God's word and the joyful experience of discovering its truth.

Pray & read Matthew chapter 7

What stands out in this reading?

What puzzles you about this reading?

How does this reading make you **feel**?

What do you **think** in response to this reading?

What will you **do** in response to this reading?

When you meet together – pray for understanding and a humble heart

read & discuss Matthew 7.1-14 (the following questions could help lead the discussion)

When Jesus says, ‘do not judge’ this seems to be in the sense of ‘do not sit as judge over someone’ or, ‘do not be judgmental’. Jesus is not against being discerning and raising concerns with others as is made evident by v. 5 and vs. 15-20. Why do you think we have to be careful about being judgmental and the measure we use? (v1-2)

Why does Jesus say take a good look at yourself before trying to help someone else with their fault? (v3-5)

What is the wisdom in not continuing to offer someone help with their fault when it is not well received? (v6)

As we live with others why can we have active humble dependence on the good Father? (v7-11)

In what ways is the way of the golden rule (do to others what you would have them do to you) **narrow** but **worth it!** (v12-14)

Think it through: What in this section encourages and promises better relationships? What do you find most difficult? What spurs you on to apply these difficult teachings of Jesus?

read & discuss Matt 7.15-29 (the following questions could help lead the discussion)

What is our active role here and why are false prophets difficult to spot? (v15) I take false prophet to refer to anyone who claims to speak for God but speaks false things.

How do you recognize false, or true, prophets? (v16-20)

What examples of bad fruit does Jesus give? (v21-23) Can we tell whether someone is true or false, merely by prophecies, exorcisms, or miracles?

What is the good fruit we are to look for? (v24) Reflect again on some of the words of Jesus in chapters 5, 6, and 7 and what it would look like to put them into practice:

Why is it wise to put the words of Jesus into practice? (v24-27)

Think it through: People are often drawn to prophets who seem to have supernatural power and authority. What does Jesus establish as the real authority for us to follow? (v28-29)

PRAY: That you’ll each grow to maturity through what you’ve just studied. Pray for the upcoming election in NSW. **Mozambique**, following an attack on a Christian village, pray for the safety and care of those displaced, that Christians will boldly share their faith with Muslims, and that many would turn to Christ. **Afghanistan**, pray for safe places for refugees to live and work, that God would change the hearts of the persecutors, and for peace and stability in the region. **Mali**, pray for the safe release of the Catholic priest who has gone missing, for God’s sustaining grace, and that the church in Mali will remain active despite increasing pressure.